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Andhra Pradesh

2,00,74,322

Women: 2,07,29,452

Transgenders:

#### Number of MLA Seats: 175

Candidates Contesting:





#### Number of MP Seats: 25

Candidates Contesting:







2387











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she pione







the development of the development of the State, everyone should exercise their right to vote and ensure that democracy wins.





## **ANDHRA PRADESH**

## Polling above 80%

## Huge turnout of women, sr citizens, first-timers

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh has registered a massive voter turnout in the General Elections held on Monday. Chief Electoral Officer Mukesh Meena, addressing a press conference in the evening said 68% voting was recorded as of 5 p.m. but given the fact that the polling was held until 10 p.m. at more than 3,000 booths, the total percentage could well cross 80%.

Mukesh Kumar Meena has affirmed the peaceful conduct of the State's genections in 2024 dismissir necessity for re-polling at any polling centres across the state

Meena noted that there were no complaints received regarding the voter list. Acknowledging isolated incidents of violence, primarily in regions such as Palnadu, Tenali, and Macherla constituencies, Meena assured prompt action

had been taken. Some technical glitches were reported concerning Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) in a few booths, prompting proactive measures with 20,000 additional machines deployed to address such issues.

Preemptive intelligence indicated the likelihood of sporadic violence, prompting heightened security arrangements across identified hotspots. Instances of EVM damage, such as in Macherla, were



Acknowledging isolated incidents of violence in regions such as Palnadu, Tenali, and Macherla constituencies, Meena assured prompt action had been taken. Technical glitches were reported concerning EVMs in a few booths, prompting proactive measures with 20,000 additional machines deployed.

swiftly addressed with data retrieval efforts and the replacement of affected machines at select centres, obviating the need for re-polling.

Despite delays in approximately 3,000 polling centres, attributed to various reasons, Meena emphasised a significant increase in polling percentages during the

current election cycle. Notably, the final polling details are pending completion of the entire polling process.

Votes Polled as of 5 pm

Female

1.40 cr

Male

1.30cr

Monday morning witnessed the commencement of polling across Andhra Pradesh, marked by a generally peaceful atmosphere, punctuated by sporadic incidents of violence in localized areas. Encouragingly, a notable turnout of senior citizens, women, and first-time vot-

ers underscored active civic participation. With a total voter count of 4,14,01,887, inclusive of 2,03,39,851 men, 2,10,58,615 women, and 3,421 transgenders, the electorate will determine the fate of 454 candidates vying for 25 parliamentary seats and 2,387 candidates contesting 175 assembly seats.

**Continued on Page 2** 

## Tsunami of pro-govt voting in State: Sajjala

PNS VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP State general secretary Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy has said that Chief Minister ocratic exercise, Jagan Mohan Reddy's relentless efforts in uplifting marginalised and impoverished communities have resonated deeply across the State. This initiated by TDP leadpositivity surrounding the ers in the Chittoor district. government's actions has culshow of support through the ballots. Addressing the media on Monday, Sajjala remarked that voters had decisively advance, evident from the menced. enthusiastic turnout at polling

stations from the crack of dawn. However,

amidst this dem-Sajjala raised concerns over reported incidents of violence Allegedly, TDP activists minated in an overwhelming engaged in attacks against YSRCP members and supporters, including instances of violence in Addanki, Peeleru, and Sattenapally made their choice well in shortly after polling com-

Despite provocations,

Sajjala criticised the TDP for what he described as baseless fearmongering tactics, particularly regarding the Land Titling Act, which he clarified is not currently in effect. Sajjala reiterated that such misinformation campaigns have been reported to the Election Commission, underscoring the party's commitment to upholding democratic principle

Sajjala commended YSRCP sity, contrasting sharply with representatives for displaying restraint in the face of adverage the reported actions of TDP-affiliated individuals.

Highlighting the importance of socio-economic development, Sajjala said that the progress of underprivileged segments directly translates to the advancement of the entire State.

He also criticised the TDP for what he deemed as baseless fearmongering tactics, particularly regarding the Land Titling Act, which he clarified is not currently in effect. Sajjala reiterated that such misinformation campaigns have been reported to the Election Commission, underscoring the party's commitment to upholding democratic principles.

## MLA, voter slap each other, EC takes action

The Election Commission of India (ECI) has taken swift action following an incident where YSRCP Tenali MLA Annabattuni Shivakumar allegedly assaulted a voter within a polling station. In response, the ECI has directed

officials to place the MLA under house arrest and initiate legal proceedings against him.

The altercation occurred when MLA Annabattuni Shivakumar arrived at a polling station to cast his vote and was urged by a voter to join the queue like everyone else.

## Jagan, Naidu, PK cast votes along with family members

PNS VIJAYAWADA

their families took part in the electoral process across various constituencies of the State on Monday, as voting commenced at 7 am. Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, accompanied by his wife YS Bharati and their children, exercised their franchise in Pulivendula. Similarly, opposition leader Chandrababu Naidu, along with his wife Bhuvaneswari, son Nara Lokesh, and daughter-in-law Brahmini, cast their votes in Undavalli. JSP chief Pawan Kalyan participated in the voting process at Mangalagiri, while YSRCP general secretary Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy did the same at Mangalagiri. Notable ministers, political figures, and public personalities also fulfilled their civic duty by voting at various polling stations throughout the state.

Prominent political figures and

It's worth noting that Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's daughters, YS Harsha Reddy and YS Varsha Reddy, drew attention as they cast their votes for the first time alongside their parents in Pulivendula.



Bhuvaneswari, son Nara Lokesh, and daughter-in-law Brahmini, cast their votes in Undavalli. JSP chief Pawan Kalyan participated in the voting process at Mangalagiri, while YSRCP general secretary Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy did the same at Mangalagiri. Notable ministers, political figures, and public personalities also fulfilled their civic duty by voting at various polling stations throughout the state.

Flying in from London, Harsha and Varsha added to the excitement surrounding the polling process. Accompanied by their parents, the booth amidst tight security, casting tion.

wife Bharati. In a separate incident, Jana Sena

Party chief Pawan Kalyan arrived at a polling booth in the Mangalagiri constituency accompanied by his wife, Konidala Anna (formerly known as Anna Lezhneva). However, this action raised concerns as it violated election regulations, as did the presence of a large entourage accompanying Kalyan. The influx of supporters turned the voting event into a photo opportunity, causing inconvenience to other voters awaiting their turn. Some individuals raised objections regarding Kalyan's wife's entry into the booth, as she was not a regisdaughters arrived at the polling tered voter at that particular loca-





#### **MLA hopefuls in Vizag seek** divine intervention for success

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

In the bustling streets of Visakhapatnam, where the fervour of democracy resonates with every stride, the day of elections is not just a political event but a spiritual journey for many MLA hopefuls. As dawn breaks on the horizon of the electoral battle, aspiring candidates gather before the temples, seeking the blessings of the divine for a favourable outcome in the polls.

Amidst the clamour of campaign rallies and last-minute canvassing efforts, a serene sight unfolds before the ancient iconic Simhachalam Temple and Sri Kanaka Maha Lakshmi Temple. Dressed in traditional attire, the hopeful MLA candidates stand in line, their hands folded in reverence, as they offer prayers for divine intervention in their electoral endeavours. For them, this ritual symbolizes not just a customary tradition but a heartfelt plea for success in the democratic arena. The atmosphere resonated with chants and hymns, creating a palpable aura of hope and anticipation.

For many of the candidates, the act of seeking divine intervention before the polls symbolized a belief in the power of spirituality to influence the outcome of the democratic process. In a landscape dominated by campaign strategies and political manoeuvring, this display of humility before the divine underscored the enduring connection between faith and politics in Indian society. Speaking to reporters outside

Continued from Page 1

Robust security measures were

implemented across identified

sensitive polling centres, ensur-

ing vigilant monitoring for a

violence, including an unfortu-

Despite minor incidents of

peaceful electoral process.

the temple premises, several candidates expressed their optimism and gratitude for the opportunity to seek blessings. Amid hectic campaigning, it is important to pause and acknowledge the spiritual dimension of our journey, remarked one candidate, his voice tinged with reverence. "Ultimately, our fate lies in the hands of the voters, but seeking divine blessings reinforces our commitment to serving the people with sincerity and

The ritual of seeking blessings before election day is not unique to Visakhapatnam but is a widespread practice observed across India. It reflects a cultural ethos where religion and politics intersect, shaping the narratives of power and governance. However, critics argue that such displays of piety are often more about optics than genuine devotion, serving as a means to curry favour with religious communities and bolstering electoral prospects. Sceptics question the efficacy of divine intervention in a process governed by voter preferences and electoral dynamics.

Despite the debates sur-rounding the role of religion in politics, the act of seeking blessings before election day remains a deeply ingrained tradition, reflecting the multifaceted nature of Indian democracy. In a diverse and pluralistic society like India, where faith permeates every aspect of life, it is perhaps inevitable that politics would also find expression in

disruptions in various districts,

the prompt response of election

officials and security personnel ensured the swift resolution of

issues, with no loss of life report-

positive note, with the democ-

ratic exercise proceeding in a

The elections concluded on a

## First-time voters swarm polling stations

First-time voters Visakhapatnam turned out in droves, flocking to polling booths before 7 AM, eager to exercise their democratic rights. While for many, it marked a moment of personal pride, for others, particularly the youth, it represented a decisive tilt towards specific political parties, significantly influencing the electoral land-

Sravya Sri (20), a first-time voter, was spotted clicking a selfie with her mother at GVMC High School, Akkayyapalem. She said, "It was my first voting experience and I am very happy. I was slightly nervous only after entering the polling room and pressing the EVM button to vote for my candidate." Lilly Thomas (22) arrived at the polling station at MVP colony along with three friends, who

were all casting their votes for the first time. After standing in an area which was partially shaded for around 30 minutes, the group of four cast their vote. Lilly said, "I was 17 at the time of the last Lok Sabha and assembly elections in 2019. I had felt bad at not being able to vote then. Getting your finger inked, becoming a part of the democracy and contributing to the decision of who will be the country's PM is a great feeling." Meanwhile, the prohibition on carrying mobile phones inside some polling stations hampered the mood of many young voters.

Equally noteworthy was the robust participation of senior citizens, who defied the scorching heat to cast their votes early in the day, allowing them to rest afterwards. Kameswar Rao, an octogenarian voter, lauded the elaborate arrangements at polling booths and commended the police for



prioritizing the needs of senior citizens by facilitating their early voting. Despite minor

hiccups, such as technical glitches with Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) in areas Thatichetlapalem, and MVP colony, Madhurawada and Gajuwaka polling operations generally proceeded smoothly. Stringent security measures were implemented to safeguard the integrity of the electoral process.

Women emerged as frontrunners in voter turnout, demonstrating a commendable balance between household responsibilities and civic engagement. Saraswati, speaking boldly, expressed her unwavering support for her party, citing the tangible benefits and assistance she has received. Chandana, a housewife in her forties, emphasized the significance of each vote in effecting positive change within her assembly constituency. For some voters, casting their ballots served as a powerful tool to hold leaders accountable for unfulfilled promises. Prakash and Rahul, B.Tech

students, emphasised the importance of substantive development initiatives over mere political rhetoric. They cited examples such as improved tap connections, street lighting, and sanitation services as pivotal factors influencing their voting decisions.

However, concerns lingered regarding voters swayed by inducements, particularly those aligning themselves with political leaders in exchange for cash or other incentives. Such actions, without due consideration for their long-term repercussions, could potentially shape the fate of the state. As the electoral process unfolds, the fervour and diversity of voter participation underscore the vibrancy of democracy in action. Each ballot cast carries the weight of civic responsibility, shaping the trajectory of governance and the collective future of the

## YSRCP files plaint with EC against ABV and Retd DG Thakur

PNS VIJAYAWADA

In an important development, YSRCP leaders have formally filed a complaint with the Election Commission, accusing additional DG AB Venkateswara Rao and retired IPS officer RP Thakur of exerting undue pressure on police officials across districts in Andhra Pradesh to sway the electoral process in favour of Telugu Desam Party (TDP). M Manohar Reddy, the state president of YSRC's legal cell, asserted that Venkateswar Rao and Thakur, purportedly stationed at the TDP headphone calls to district police threat of severe repercussions should they fail to com-

YSRC's general secretary and MLC Lella Appi Reddy for-Chief Election Commissioner



Electoral Officer of Andhra Pradesh, highlighting the alleged misconduct of the aforementioned individuals. He further elaborated that AB Venkateswara Rao, currently quarters, have been making under suspension, and RP Thakur, a retired IPS officer, towards TDP activists, and officials, coercing them to act have allegedly exhibited turning a blind eye to poten-in favour of TDP under the biased behaviour against tial instances of rigging and YSRCP for the past five years. booth capturing during the Reddy accused them of orchestrating their opera-Reddy disclosed that tions from the TDP headquarters in Mangalagiri, issuing verbal directives to ranging from DGs and IGs to



Superintendents, Deputy

Manohar Reddy emphasised that as current or former law enforcement officers, Venkateswara Rao and discharge their responsibili-

ly. However, he lamented that the duo stands accused of colluding with Telugu Desam and abusing their influence over police personnel. Reddy condemned these alleged actions as undemocratic, constituting a blatant violation of the model code of conduct and an abuse of police power, which, he stressed, constitutes an offence under the Representation of the People Act, 1951. He urged the Election Commission to take

prompt and decisive action against Venkateswara Rao and RP Thakur, and subsequently direct all relevant authorities, including DGs, IGs, DIGs, District Police Superintendents, Deputy Inspectors, to discharge their duties impartially and independently, devoid of any external influence, thereby ensuring the conduct of free and fair elections during the Parliamentary elections in

## Woman carried in 'doli' to vote in AP elections

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

In a testament to the challenges faced by residents of remote tribal hamlets in Alluri SeethaRama Raju district, a woman defied all odds by being carried on a doli to cast her vote in the elections. The absence of proper road connectivity in the region has long been a hurdle for the community, yet their determination to participate in the democratic process remains unwavering. The tribal hamlet, nestled amidst the picturesque landscape of Alluri Seetha Rama Raju district, is a vivid illustration of wider infrastructural discrepancies prevalent in rural India. With no access to paved roads, residents often encounter immense difficulty basic of daily activities, let alone participating in electoral proceedings.

Against this backdrop of infrastructural neglect, the woman, whose name remains undisclosed, emerged as a beacon of resilience and determination. Aware of the signif-



the future of her community and the nation at large, she resolved to overcome the obstacles hindering her path to the polling booth. Recognising our, the woman's fellow villagers rallied together to facilitate her journey. Amidst the verdant hills and rugged terrain, a doli—a traditional palanquin—was employed to carry her to the nearest polling station, located several kilometres away from the hamlet.

icance of her vote in shaping

#### No elections in future if Modi wins this time: Kharge

Sukla Paksha

May 14 02:50 AM

May 15 04:19 AM to May 16 06:23 AM

May 13 11:23 AM

May 14 01:05 PM

to May 14 01:05 PM

to May 15 03:25 PM

3:24 PM to 5:00 PM

9:00 AM to 10:36 AM

to May 15 04:19 AM

Polling above...

**PNS** ■ HAZSRIBAG/LATEHER

Alleging that the Constitution and democracy were under threat, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Monday claimed that no elections will be held in the future if Prime Minister Narendra Modi wins the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

Addressing an election rally in Jharkhand's Hazaribag, Kharge also attacked the PM over the arrest of former CM Hemant Soren, and dared him to arrest "Adani and Ambani".

TODAY

**ALMANAC** 

Tithi: Saptami:

Nakshatram:

Ashtami

Pushya:

Ashlesha

Rahukalan

Sunset: 6:36 PM

Month & Paksham:

"The Constitution and democracy are in danger, and people are in danger. If you don't have fundamental rights, you will be slaves. No elections will be held in the future if Modi wins this time," he claimed.

"You arrested Hemant Soren, why aren't you arresting Adani and Ambani?" he said, hitting back at the prime minister who earlier alleged that the Congress received "tempo loads of cash" from the two businessmen for its leader Rahul Gandhi to stop "abusing" them.

#### mally complained to the incumbent police officials Thakur are duty-bound to ongoing Assembly and of India and the Chief District

aviour against

#### Superintendents, and Circle Inspectors, instructing them to extend undue favours to TDP, including refraining from making arrests, adopting a lenient approach ongoing polling process.

Police ties impartially and diligent- Andhra Pradesh.

#### Voting Machines (EVM) and

manipulating votes. Goshamahal ACP K. Venkat Reddy said, "Initially, the two BJP workers were booked for manipulating voters by using the EVMs and were taken into custody. Then Madhavi Latha arrived at the police station along with her supporters.

## MLA, voter slap ...

Continued from Page 1

Enraged by this request, the MLA reportedly slapped the voter. In retaliation, the voter slapped back, leading to a physical altercation between the MLA's supporters and the voter.

In a concerning turn of events, rather than receiving immediate medical attention, the injured voter was taken to the police station and charged for allegedly assaulting the MLA. The incident quickly gained traction on social media, prompting the ECI to intervene decisively.

Questions have been raised regarding the presence of a large entourage accompanying the MLA inside the polling station, with TDP leaders criticizing the lack of restraint displayed by the MLA. A YŚRĆP insider, speaking on condition of anonymity, acknowledged the impropriety of the MLA's actions.

In a separate incident, YSRCP Guntur LS candidate Kilari Rosaiah faced criticism for his behaviour at a polling station, where female voters objected to his conduct.

Concerns have been expressed within the YSRCP about the negative impact of courage.

such incidents on public perception. A senior party figure remarked that MLA Shivakumar should have exercised restraint and acted responsibly.

At another polling station in Guntur, voters voiced their discontent, stating that they had entrusted the YSRCP with their vote only to be met with violence. Similar incidents were reported in Macherla, where followers of MLA Pinnelli Ramakrishna Reddy engaged in violence, damaging vehicles near a polling station.

Opposition parties condemned the inaction of the police and highlighted instances of EVM damage in Macherla, resulting in the suspension of polling. Clashes between YSRCP and TDP activists halted the voting process at the Tummarakota polling booth, leading to a tense situation in the village. TDP candidate Julakanti Brahmanand

Reddy's vehicle was also targeted in an attack at Rentala village while he was monitoring polling activities. In response to the incident, TDP national general

secretary Nara Lokesh commended the voters who retaliated against the YSRCP MLA, praising their Although every possible care and caution has been taken to avoid errors or omissions, this publication is being sold on the condition and understanding that information given in this publication is merely for reference and must not be taken as having authority of or binding in any way on the writers, editors, publishers, and printers and sellers who do not owe any responsibility for any

## Madhavi Latha booked for checking voter IDs of Muslims

PNS HYDERABAD

The Malakpet Police on Monday booked the BJP's Lok Sabha candidate, Kompella Madhavi Latha, for harassing women vot-

In a viral video, the BJP candidate was seen checking the voter IDs of Muslim women and

asking them to unveil to check their identities.

District Election Officer Ronald Rose took note of the issue and asked the Malakpet Police to register a case against the candidate.

After the video went viral, the Collector took to X and said, "A case has been registered at the Malakpet Police Station against BJP candidate Madhavi Latha under Sections 171C, 186, and 505 (1) (c) of IPC and Section 132 of the Representation of the

People Act." In another incident, Madhavi Latha and two BJP workers were booked by the Mangalhat Police for using dummy Electronic

> and unemployed youngsters and instead giving prominence to wedding functions in top industrialists' families. He said if the INDIA bloc comes to power, a list of poor families would be compiled and Rs 1 lakh annually -- or Rs 8,500 per month -- transferred in the bank account of one woman in each such

Gandhi also said an INDIA bloc government would waive the loans of small farmers and legalised common minimum support price would be provided to them.

He reiterated that the Agniveer scheme of short-

#### 03:08 AM to 04:53 AM Varjyam 12:12 PM to 1:48 PM 06:14 AM to 07:57 AM Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:46 AM to 12:38 PM VIJAYAWADA WEATHER Forecast: Scattered Thunderstorms **Temp:** 38° Humidity: 57% Sunrise: 5:48 AM

**Updated:** May 13, 2024 5:00 PM

#### 'My family works for Rae Bareli, Modi for Adani, Ambani'

PNS ■ RAE BARELI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said Monday his family has always worked for the people of the Rae Bareli parliamentary constituency, unlike Prime Minister Narendra Modi who works in the "interest of Adani and

Addressing his first election meeting in the constituency after his nomination, Gandhi said he was contesting the Lok Sabha election from the seat because his family has deep links with the people here.

Hitting out at the Modi government, he claimed that loans amounting to Rs 16 lakh crore, which is equal to 24 years of money allotted under the MGNREGA, have been waived for 22-25 top industrialists.



Rahul Gandhi said his grandmother Indira Gandhi, his father Rajiv Gandhi and his mother Sonia Gandhi have worked to improve the lives of people in Rae Bareli.

Considered a Gandhi family bastion, the Rae Bareli seat had been represented by senior Congress leader Sonia Gandhi since 2004. The constituency was earlier represented by former prime minister Indira Gandhi.

In his address, Rahul Gandhi also accused the media of not showing the problems faced by farmers

duration recruitment in the defence forces would be done away and youngsters would be provided permanent jobs in the armed forces with pension provisions.

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## Tension at Poranki as Bode, Jogi supporters clash over 'fake voters'

Incidents of tension and discord marked the electoral landscape in the Penamaluru Assembly constituency of Krishna district as the YSRCP candidate and Minister Jogi Ramesh raised objections regarding alleged instances of fake voters entering a polling booth in Poranki. Opposition TDP candidate and former MLA Bode Prasad and his supporters reportedly caused disturbances among voters on Monday.

The Penamaluru Assembly constituency, a key segment in Krishna district, witnessed a substantial turnout during the ongoing general election. However, at around 3 pm, amid the steady flow of voters, TDP's Bode Prasad and his supporters allegedly disrupted the proceedings. Upon receiving information regarding purported fake voters attempting to cast their ballots, YSRCP candidate Jogi Ramesh promptly intervened at the Poranki ZP High School polling booth.

The situation escalated when TDP candidate Bode Prasad, accompanied by around 200



Confrontations were reported also in A Kondur and Kanchikacherla mandals in the NTR district, with both TDP and YSRCP factions engaging in heated arguments. TDP Lok Sabha candidate Kesineni Sivanath (Chinni), accused the police of failing to quell these clashes, prompting intervention from higher authorities, and leading to the eventual dispersal of both groups.

followers, confronted YSRCP leaders and workers at the polling booth. Notably, the Penamaluru segment boasts the highest voter count in the erstwhile Krishna district, with numerous voters residing in other states and countries returning to their hometowns

to participate in the electoral

Tensions flared as TDP leaders purportedly attempted to facilitate the voting of non-resident Indians (NRIs) and individuals from other states, sparking a confrontation between YSRCP and TDP fac-

that Jogi Ramesh instigated violence against one of their party members, Veerla Rajesh, while YSRCP leaders refuted these claims, asserting that TDP leaders were attempting to facilitate the casting of illegitimate votes.

Minister Jogi Ramesh asserted that his party had identified instances of TDP supporters purportedly casting fraudu-lent votes. He further alleged that TDP leaders had attacked a YSRCP activist, Arepalli Ramu when questioned about the authenticity of the votes. He called upon law enforcement agencies and the Election Commission to take appropriate action against Bode Prasad and his supporters.

Elsewhere, similar confrontations were reported in A Kondur and Kanchikacherla mandals in the NTR district, with both TDP and YSRCP factions engaging in heated arguments. TDP Lok Sabha candidate Kesineni Sivanath (Chinni), accused the police of failing to quell these clashes, prompting intervention from higher authorities, and leading to the eventual dispersal of both groups.

## Followers of Vamsi and Yarlagadda clash

PNS VIJAYAWADA

In the wake of the general election polling, tension flared between supporters of the ruling YSRCP and the opposition TDP in the significant Gannavaram assembly constituency, located in Krishna district, on Monday. Tempers rose as Dr Vallabhaneni Vamsi Mohan of the YSRCP and TDP's Yarlagadda Venkata Rao visited polling booths simultaneously.

Multiple altercations erupted between party members and leaders at various locations, including Nunna in Vijayawada Rural Mandal, NTR district, and Surampalli in Gannavaram Mandal, Krishna district. The YSRCP supporters blocked TDP candidate Yarlagadda Venkata Rao's convoy between Surampalli and Mustabad village, escalating tensions. Both Dr Vallabhaneni

Vamsi Mohan and Yarlagadda Venkata Rao were present in their respective convoys dur-

ing the confrontation. Despite police presence, clashes ensued between the two parties, which the authorities struggled to After thirty minutes, the police managed to divert the

candidates' routes, diffusing the situation. Subsequently, calm was restored in Surampalli. Notably, the Krishna district police failed to establish a security detail for TDP's Yarlagadda Venkata Rao.

constituency held significance for both YSRCP and TDP. Hence, Dr Vamsi Mohan of

YSRCP and TDP's Venkata Rao personally monitored the polling booths' turnout. Trouble first erupted at ZP High School in Nunna when Yarlagadda Venkata Rao attempted to enter the polling

leading to objections from YSRCP cadres. An altercation ensued between Venkata Rao and a senior YSRCP leader, resulting in clashes between the party members.

booths with his supporters,

The Gannavaram assembly Commissioner Ramakrishna intervened to restore order. Another altercation occurred at polling booth

No.10 between Dr. Vamsi Mohan and Yarlagadda Venkata Rao's supporters but was swiftly handled by the police.

The situation escalated when YSRCP leaders and cadres obstructed TDP's Yarlagadda Venkata Rao's convoy at NH-16 bypass in Surampalli. The YSRCP supporters, from Nunna, Surampalli, Mustabad, and surrounding villages, displayed party flags and incited con-frontation. Objects were thrown at Venkata Rao's convoy before police intervention finally brought the situation under control.

TDP leaders accused Dr Vamsi Mohan of instigating the clashes out of fear of defeat, while YSRCP countered, asserting Dr Vamsi Mohan's impending victory for a third consecutive term in Gannavaram. They dismissed TDP's allegations as desperate attempts to undermine Dr

## 73.39% polling in combined Krishna

Approximately 73.39% of polling was recorded in Krishna and NTR districts by 6 pm on Monday. Notably, Krishna district saw a turnout of over 73.53% by 5 pm. Despite this, several polling stations, especially in the Vijayawada three Assembly constituencies of the NTR district, reported below-average participation.

District Election Officers (DEOs) and Returning Officers had emphasised achieving an 85% polling rate across both districts, but this target remained elusive due to apparent voter disengagement. In the initial hours post-poll commencement, polling figures stagnated below 10%.

However, there was a gradual increase in the lunchtime period, though the scorching heat deterred many voters from venturing out to cast their ballots. Between 11 am and 2 pm, both NTR and Krishna districts saw notably low turnout rates.

conditions, the NTR district Gannavaram at 59.22%, polling. Many polling stations Machilipatnam with approxiin the district opened at 7:30

am, with voting extended until 10 pm. By 9 am, only 8.95% turnout was recorded, gradually climbing to 39.69% by 1

The turnout figures at subsequent intervals were as follows: 55.71% at 3 pm, 60.55% at 4 pm, 67.44% at 5 pm, and a final tally of 73.39% by 6 pm. Even after the official closing time, many voters remained queued, prompting authorities to facilitate their voting. The highest turnout, at

79.28%, was observed in the Tiruvur assembly constituency by 6 pm. Similarly, the Jaggayyapet constituency recorded a 78.20% turnout, Nandigama Vijayawada East 69.11%, Vijayawada West 68.30%, and Vijayawada Central 68.15%. In Krishna district, the

polling percentage reached 73.53% by 5 pm, a notable improvement from the 63.53% recorded at 4 pm. At 4 pm, Pamarru Assembly constituency reported a 72.21% turnout, followed by Avanigadda at 66.21%, Pedana at 65.44%, Despite favourable weather Gudivada at 64.49%, mately 57.96% polling.







## MINOR INCIDENTS MAR POLLING IN STATE

#### Police fire rubber bullets in air to disperse clashing mobs in Macherla

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Police fired rubber bullets to disperse clashing activists in Macherla, amid violent incidents that marred polling in several districts including Guntur, Palnadu, Kadapa, and Chittoor.

Tensions flared between YSRCP and TDP supporters, leading to clashes and stone-pelting across various areas in the state. In one instance in Narasaraopet, TDP activists targeted the residence of YSRCP MLA Gopireddy Srinivasa Reddy, prompting retaliatory stone-throwing by YSRCP supporters towards the house of TDP candidate Chadalavada Aravinda Babu. Subsequent clashes between the two factions ensued, necessitating police intervention through baton charges and the firing of rubber bullets to disperse the agitated crowds.

An altercation also unfolded when YSRCP MLA candidate Annabattuni Shivakumar queue, resulting in a physical confrontation with a voter. The Srikanth and district SP

ensuing scuffle saw Shivakumar and the voter exchanging blows, followed by an assault on the voter by Shivakumar's supporters within the polling premises. The Election Commission responded swiftly, directing law enforcement to take action, including the suspension of a Sub-inspector for allegedly releas-

in a separate clash in Punganur. In Macherla, disruptions occurred as activists stormed a polling station and vandalised polling staff to suspend operaof fear for their safet The intervention of Guntur Range IGP

ing detained individuals involved

Bindumadhav helped restore order and assess the situation on the ground.

Meanwhile, TDP MLA candidate Julakanti Brahmananda Reddy faced hostility when YSRCP activists targeted his vehicle while he was monitoring polling activities at a station. Amidst these incidents, the

Opposition Telugu Desam Party lodged complaints with the Election Commission, alleging over 120 instances of violence across the state during polling. polling materials, prompting Former Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu condemned tions and vacate the premises out the lack of security, expressing personnel amidst the escalating

## Guv Nazeer, CEO Meena cast exercise franchise in V'wada

PNS VIJAYAWADA

In the ongoing elections, numerous notable figures and candidates have exercised their franchise across various polling stations in Vijayawada, as well as in other parts of the NTR and Krishna districts. Governor SA Nazeer and Chief Electoral Officer Mukhesh Kumar Meena were among those who cast their votes at the Railway Function Hall in Vijayawada.

Governor Nazeer, accompanied by his wife, voted in the Vijayawada Central Constituency, while CEO Meena also participated in the electoral process within the same constituency.
NTR district collector Dr S

Dilli Rao and his wife, along with IAS officer P Prashanti, exercised their franchise at the Railway Function Hall in Vijayawada. Likewise, YŚRCP's Vijayawada Lok Sabha candidate Kesineni Srinivas, also known as Nani, exercised his voting right alongside his family members in the Vijayawada East constituency.

CPM state secretary V Srinivasa Rao cast his vote at the 234th polling booth located within the premises of CVRMC School at Governorpet in Vijayawada. Meanwhile, Krishna district collector DK Balaji and his wife queued up like other citizens to cast their votes at St Francis High School in Machilipatnam. In addition to these prominent individuals, numerous officials, candidates,





exercised their franchise at their designated polling sta-

NTR district collector Dr S Dilli Rao and Krishna district collector DK Balaji oversaw the voting process from the Command Control Room, ensuring smooth conduct throughout. With only minor incidents reported, the polling process proceeded peacefully across both districts.

Under the guidance of the Election Commission of India (ECI) and Andhra Pradesh Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), administrations in NTR and Krishna districts ensured that all necessary facilities were provided to voters as per regulations



#### Septuagenarian woman injured in police lathi charge

PNS TIRUPATI

A septuagenarian woman was injured when the police resorted to a lathi charge to disperse clashing YSRCP and TDP workers at Annamedu village in Naidupet mandal Sullurpet constituency on Monday.

Sources said that the YSRCP and TDP workers clashed during the polling. The police led by SI Gopinath resorted to the lathi charge to disperse the clashing activists.

Seventy-year-old Sheik Julekabhi, who sat in front of her house, was hit by the SI with a lathi and she suffered a bleeding injury on her forehead.

She was admitted to a hospital. The family members of victim Julekabhi said that without keeping in view the age of the woman SI Gopinath hit her with a lathi. Meanwhile, the highhanded act of the SI drew flak from all quar-

## Oppn condemns alleged voter intimidation by YSRCP

PNS VIJAYAWADA

In a united front against what they claim was voter intimidation, leaders representing the TDP, Jana Sena, and BJP alliance held a joint press conference.

Varla Ramaiah, the TDP politburo member, asserted that the turnout of voters at polling stations since the crack of dawn signals a profound desire for change and a rebellion against the incumbent government. He vehemently denounced the reported violent

incidents, labelling them as a direct assault on the democratic process. Ramaiah stressed that these attacks, which he claimed have been persistent since the onset of the elections in Macherla, are unacceptable.

MA Shariff, a leader within the TDP, brought to light various instances of violence, including the assault on Brahma Reddy, a vocal advocate for public sovereignty, and the subsequent vandalism of his vehicle. He also cited attacks on polling agents striving to ensure fair polling

procedures, along with threats directed at voters. Shariff underscored the gravity of the situation by pointing out attacks on candidates in multiple constituencies, attributing these acts to what he described as a widespread campaign of violence orchestrated by the YSRCP. He reiterated the TDP's call for heightened security measures at polling stations to safeguard the rights of voters and condemned what he

termed as terror tactics employed by elements allegedly associated with Jagan Reddy's faction.

Lanka Dinakar, speaking on behalf of the BJP, commended the unwavering resolve of voters across the state in supporting the alliance, despite purported efforts to disrupt the electoral process. He cited instances of alleged electoral malpractice aimed at undermining specific candidates and decried violent acts reportedly committed by the YSRCP, including attacks on law enforcement personnel. Dinakar urged citizens to stand

firm in their commitment to the future of the state, notwithstanding the challenges posed by what he characterized as the

regime of Jagan Reddy. In a similar vein, Janasena Spokesperson Prof KK Sarath lambasted YSRCP leaders for what he perceived as attempts to stifle the democratic rights of voters out of fear of impending defeat. He condemned these actions as morally reprehensible and called on citizens to resist any efforts aimed at undermining the integrity of the electoral process.

#### Meat, booze, and bribes spice up Vizag's poll day

in the morning

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In the heart of Visakhapatnam, where politics often dances with tradition, election day took on a flavour like never before. As voters across the district headed to the booths, they were met with a buffet of unconventional tactics employed by political candidates vying for their support. Taking the age-old adage "the way to a man's heart is through his stomach" quite literally, several MLA hopefuls in Visakhapatnam turned to the power of food to sway voters. Amidst the tight security measures on the eve of polling day, political parties dished out fresh chicken and meat to voters and their families in the morn-

ing.
Local chicken and mutton shops have been hustling since the early hours of Monday morning, preparing half-kg packets along with ready-made cooking masalas to meet the heightened demand. "We received a bulk order, which is three times our average Sunday remarked a wholesale

poultry seller in Akkayyapalem, highlighting the significant spike in demand. Additionally, street vendors near polling stations have been offering complimentary servings of piping hot idly-vada and crispy dosas

According to officials from the Veterinary wing of Greater Visakhapatnam parties dished Municipal out fresh chicken

Corporation (GVMC), there are 1,242 authorised chicken shops and 700 meat shops withthe Visakhapatnam

Parliament constituency limits, with an estimated 600 unauthorised small shops operating in the area. On an average Sunday, between 1.5 to 2 lakh kgs of dressed chicken are sold in the constituency, but this particular Monday witnessed sales surpassing three lakh kilo-

Furthermore, some kirana stores have been accepting coupons issued by political par-

doubled prices for regular ties, offering oil packets and basmati rice to voters. Tiffin packets have also been distribany obstacles. In certain areas like uted under the guise of arranging for polling agents, while tea

charge since 5 am, accompanied by two Osmania biscuits. A Poorna Market rice trader mentioned receiving a large order of 25,000

and coffee vendors have been

providing their services free of

bags, each weighing 10 kg, on Sunday. This and meat to voters order, destined and their families for a political party, is currently in transit and is scheduled for delivery

by Monday afternoon. Concurrently, another political faction distributed over 4,000 vanity boxes to women residing in the gated community. In defiance of the government's declaration of a dry period in Andhra Pradesh, the most popular alcoholic beverages smoothly changed hands from one pocket to another. For black market dealers, it proved

to be a lucrative day as they

drinkers without encountering

Anandapuram, Kothavalasa, and S Kota, polling day activities resemble a family picnic, with arrangements made for breakfast, lunch, and snacks throughout the day, all under the watchful eye of enforcement authorities. For some smalltime caterers, the election season has proven to be a lucrative opportunity, as they've been tasked with preparing biryani packets and organising evening cocktail parties in farmhouses

post 7 pm. Reflecting on the day's events, one political leader expressed the need for refreshments, be it soft drinks or hard, before retiring for the night with family. However, amidst the festivities, youth have found themselves unexpectedly receiving money from political parties, turning the polling day into an unexpected windfall. Ramu (name changed) shared his plans to enjoy a lavish evening in a hotel with friends after 8

#### BJP accuses YSRCP of attacking NDA workers

PNS NEW DELHI

The BJP on Monday accused the ruling YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) in Andhra Pradesh of unleashing "unprecedented violence" to target National Democratic Alliance (NDA) workers and sought the Election Commission's intervention.

The party wrote to the poll body even as voting was for the assembly and Lok Sabha was being held in the state. It claimed that police were acting as mute spectators and not ensuring free and fair elec-

The Election Commission has aimed to increase the poll percentage but it has been negated by the police indifference and inaction of district election officers, BJP general secretary Arun Singh, who is his party's in-charge for the polls in the state, said.



## Modi coming to power again is on the cards

The Opposition camp argues that the BJP is not going to repeat its 2019 performance in the 2014 elections. Pseudo intelligentsia also subscribe to the view. But, there is no substance in their contention because the popularity of the Modi-led BJP is on the rise since 2014 and there was no

since 2014 and there was no instance in it waning.

The BJP is growing with each passing day, whereas the Congress is on the way out. The confidence of the people in Modi is increasing day by day. Many still did not understand that his fans run into several millions. At the into several millions. At the same time, the BJP, during the past 10 years, became stronger and expanded to every nook and corner of the country. But the antagonists of the BJP are not realising

In UP, the double-engine government is working powerfully. In UP, women did not dare go out alone. Mafia and goondagiri prevailed everywhere in the State in the

past. But, under the leadership of Modi-Yogi, several infrastructural development projects worth several crores of rupees are being implemented. Several thousands of crores of funds are trickling down to the people directly into their bank accounts under various welfare schemes.

he pioneer

The law and order improved by 100%. The people are heaving a big sigh of solid Rom tomals building in relief. Ram temple building in Ayodhya, Kasi Corridor development and such other measures helped the govern-ment value the religious sentiments of millions of Indians. Under such a situation, in the name of castes and minorities, several vested interests joined forces. Does it mean BJP's majority is diminishing in UP? The BJP is certain to win many more LS seats this time, compared to the past.

Not only in UP, the BJP wave will sweep across the double engine government states of MP, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Assam,

The law and order improved by 100%. The people are heaving a big sigh of relief. Ram temple building in Ayodhya, Kasi Corridor development and such other measures helped the government value the religious sentiments of millions of Indians. Under such a situation, in the name of castes and minorities, several vested interests joined forces. Does it mean BJP's majority is diminishing in UP? The BJP is certain to win many more LS seats this time, compared to the past.

Uttarakhand, Haryana and

In AP too, Modi joined hands with N Chandrababu Naidu and Pawan Kalyan, leading to multiply the interest among the people towards the BJP. The YSRCP camp is left disturbed gauzing the heightened awareness among the voters. In Telangana, there is a strong undercurrent for the BJP. People are taking the BJP under their wings. The people are sure that soon double engine government will be formed in Telangana shortly.

There are many reasons for the BJP's success in polls. The people consider the Modi-led BJP as the party that is very close to their lives and ideas.

The country became stronger in the past 10 years under Modi. Anyone can say confidently that the implementation of welfare and development programmes is excellent. The people observed Modi taking on the



Y SATYA KUMAR **BJP National Secretary** 

rivals confidently and enhancing the country's image in the world eyes. That is why, the BJP built its election campaign with Modi as nucleus. It is everyone's knowledge that Modi fulfils promises and his skill in delivering impressive speeches. People also know that there is no greater speaker or leader than Modi. His clean image as a non-corrupt politician and protecting the national interests made his leadership unparalleled. Why

did Pakistan, which rorism into India, TRULY ) is in a defensive **SPEAKING** position? People believe that Modi regime, unlike the previous regimes, would not tolerate the misdeeds of Pakistan and will not hesitate to cross the border to teach a lesson to the Pak rulers. It is attributed to the success achieved by Modi regime in

explaining facts to world.
Individual toilets, LPG connections, PM Awas Yojna, distribution of food grains, financial assistance to farmers, Mudra loans and health insurance are giving excellent results. That is why, the BJP is able to reach out to the beneficiaries of these schemes confidently. The Opposition argument that the unified minorities will defeat the BJP is totally wrong. In 2019, such contention was made, yet BJP achieved tremendous success.

In fact, the opposition parties should put a question to themselves, "Why should the people give credence to them?" If they put the question, their condition would have improved some-

what. It is a mistake that the people will not com-pare with the six-and-a-half decade rule of the opposition with the 10-year rule of Modi.

The people are not ready to buy the promises made by Rahul Gandhi to deliver social justice. What happened to the social justice during the Congress regime? In the last elections, Rahul Gandhi promised guaranteed minimum income to the people, but voters did not believe in him. Will the voters believe in his promises on delivering social justice and safeguarding the Constitution? If the Congress warns the people of impending amendment to Constitution by the BJP in case of being voted to power, who will believe it?

During the Cong regime, the Constitution was set aside impose Emergency; times. The Congress had insulted architect of Constitution Dr BR Ambedkar. Are the people ignorant about it? The Congress and the Opposition parties have no other agenda

except slinging mud on Modi.
That is why, PM Modi exudes confidence that the BJP will win more than 400 seats and declared so after the conclusion of the fourth phase of the elections. Rahul Gandhi, running away from Amethi in UP, and contesting from Raibarely, his mother's constituency, Congress depending on the mercy of Samajwadi Party, Aam Admi Party, Rashtriya Janata Dal, NCP, Shiv Sena for contesting seats, continuing Trinamool Congress in the alliance INDIA in spite of its unwillingness to continue in it are the signs of weakness of the Congress. Modi predicting Congress winning not even 50 seats will ring in true on

## Petrol bombs hurled; 10 bikes, 4 shops gutted

**PNS** ■ GUNTUR

Violence incidents continued to take place even during the last minute of polling on Monday, as some miscreants said to be the YSR activists, hurled petrol mobs at Tangedu village in Gurajala constituen-

When the polling was in progress at 7 pm, a clash took place between the YSRCP and TDP activists. A long queue was formed in front of the polling station at the village even at 7 pm to

Suddenly some miscreants hurled petrol mobs near the polling station. As many as 10 motorcycles and four shops were gutted in the petrol bomb attack. Since the village was located far away from the mandal headquarters, the police could not reach the vil-

lage in time. Meanwhile, the TDP leaders voting percentage.

The TDP leaders alleged that the YSRCP activists hurled petrol bombs in a bid to intimidate the voters, who were in the queue to cast their vote, to reduce the voting percentage.

alleged that the YSRCP activists hurled petrol bombs in a bid to intimidate the voters, who were in the queue to cast their vote, to reduce the

On the other side, the TDP activists responded by hurling stones at the other group. A tense situation prevailed at the village. The security forces were yet to reach the village.

## Fresh clashes erupt in Palnadu, repolling demanded in 2 villages

PNS VIJAYAWADA

A violent clash erupted on Monday night in Narasaraopet, resulting in the hospitalization of ten individuals, including a relative of Narasaraopet MLA Gopireddy Srinivas Reddy. Former minister and Telugu Desam candidate for Sattenapalli Assembly con-Kanna stituency, Lakshminarayana, has called for repolling in two villages, alleging electoral malpractice by YSRCP aspirant and min-

ister Ambati Rambabu. According to reports, supporters of the YSRCP launched an attack on the vehicle of Narasaraopet Telugu Desam candidate, Dr. Chadalavada

Aravindbabu, and set it ablaze. In retaliation, Telugu Desam workers targeted the hospital and office of MLA Srinivas Reddy, resulting in injuries to ten individuals, including a relative of the MLA. Police resorted to firing rubber bullets to quell the violence and restore

Meanwhile, Sattenapalli Telugu Desam candidate, Kanna Lakshminarayana, filed complaint with Election Commission officials alleging an assault on him and his supporters at Chagantivaripalem. He accused Minister Rambabu's supporters of attacking them with stones and sticks when they attempt-ed to prevent electoral fraud and called for strict action against the perpetrators.

Lakshminarayana claimed

that Minister Rambabu and his supporters were involved in rigging at Chagantivaripalem and neighbouring villages. Upon receiving information, he immediately visited the Chagantivaripalem, only to be met with violence from Minister Rambabu's supporters, resulting in injuries to his supporters. Lakshminarayana demanded that the Election Commission conduct

repolling Chagantivaripalem and Lankalakurapadu villages to ensure a free and fair electoral

## Ambati alleges rigging in some polling stations

PNS NARASARAOPET

Minister for Irrigation Ambati Rambabu regretted the 'unprecedented' violence that took place during the polling and the TDP activists indulged in rigging in

some polling stations.

Talking to the media after the end of polling in Sattenapalli on Monday, Ambati Rambabu said that he had contested in elections thrice so far but he had never seen such violence which took place during this polling.

'Unprecedented violence was unleashed by the TDP in

understood that they were going to be defeated and that is why they resorted to violent incidents," he slammed.

The Minister claimed that rigging took place in the polling and the stationary of the stationary of

polling stations of Dammalapadu, Narinipadu, Chaganti Vripalem, Gullapalli and Kunkulagunta.

He alleged that some election staff colluded with the TDP cadres and that is why rigging took place in the polling booths. Ambati Rambabu said he would complain to the ECI about the violence and rigging and seek repolling in the polling stations.



## Train delay irks Vizag voters | North Andhra witnesses historic surge in voter turnout

Passengers on Train No. 20812 NED-Vskp Express, running Nanded Visakhapatnam, faced a massive nine-hour delay. About 1,000 people who were travelling to Visakhapatnam to cast their votes sought help from the Election Commission.

The train, which departed Nanded at 4.30 pm on Sunday, was initially running five hours late. However, the delay gradually increased to nine hours, leaving passengers distressed about missing polling booths before 6 pm on Monday.

"We received a message about a five-hour delay. We

Vizag by 3 or 4 pm to vote," said one disappointed passenger. "But the five-hour delay turned into nine hours. It will be 24 hours since we boarded this

Another passenger wrote on "Can I know why my train 20812 is running so late? We are travelling to cast our vote. With the current delay, we don't have hope of reaching before voting ends.'

The super-fast express was supposed to arrive in Visakhapatnam at 9.10 am on Monday. With the nine-hour delay, there is no possibility of reaching before 5 pm, after polling booths close.

The polling booths across North Andhra Pradesh witnessed a significant surge in voter turnout compared to previous elections, thanks to the concerted efforts of the district administration, bolstered by strict enforcement by police officials. The region, compris-Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram, Srikakulam,

Parvathipuram-Manyam, and Alluri Sitarama Raju districts, showcased a newfound enthusiasm for democratic engagement, with turnout percentages reaching unprecedented

Visakhapatnam, often con-

the region, saw a remarkable turnout of nearly 65 percent, signifying a substantial increase from previous electoral exercises. Vizianagaram surpassed expectations with a staggering 73.02 percent turnout, reflecting the efficacy of the administrative initiatives in galvanising voter par-

Similarly, Srikakulam, a district known for its cultural heritage, witnessed a notable turnout of 71.25 percent, indicative of the collective will of people to exercise their franchise. The impact of the administration's efforts was also evident in Parvathipuramrise from past elec-

tions. Additionally, Alluri Sitarama Raju district, named after the iconic freedom fighter, recorded a turnout of 57 percent, underscoring the resonance of the electoral

process with the spirit of democracy. Central to this surge in voter

participation were the comprehensive awareness campaigns

sidered the economic hub of Manyam, where voter turnout orchestrated by the district facilitating smooth voting process. The stood at a commendable 65 administration. Through a percent, showcasing a notable multifaceted approach encom-

Concerted

administration,

officials, bear

fruit

passing social media, traditional media outlets, commuefforts of district nity engagements, and door-to-door bolstered by strict campaigns, officials effecenforcement by police tively disseminated information regarding the importance of

voting and the impact of citizen engagement on governance. Furthermore, substantial investments in upgrading infrastructure at polling booths played a pivotal role in

processes. The general electorate expressed appreciation for the initiatives, which include improving accessibility for voters with disabilities, simplifying the voting process with electronic voting machines (EVMs), and tackling logistical hurdles with

These efforts are seen as promoting inclusivity and enabling every individual to

wheelchair facilities at polling

vote easily and effectively. Equally crucial was the vigilant enforcement by police officials, ensuring adherence to electoral norms and safeguard-

ing the integrity of the voting

EVMs now hold the verdict

sures deterred any potential malpractices and instilled confidence among voters, contributing to the overall success of the elections. The palpable increase in voter turnout across North Andhra Pradesh not only reflects the maturing democratic consciousness of its residents, but also underscores the efficacy of proactive governance and collaborative efforts between the administration and law enforcement agencies. As the region sets new benchmarks in electoral participation, it serves as a beacon of inspiration for fostering robust democratic practices across the nation.

## KTR thinks Jagan likely to win in Andhra Pradesh

**PNS** ■ HYDERABAD

BRS leader KT Rama Rao thinks that YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has the edge in Andhra Pradesh.

He thanked the Telangana Government for arranging gen- this time we are hoping for across the country but he has

no power outages.

He said he voted for a leader who won Telangana. After voting, KTR said, "We are very confident and hopeful. Our best tally was 11 LS seats and

Sajjanar cast his vote along

with his family members in

Kondapur on Monday. After

casting his vote, he said that

the Constitution of India has

provided an opportunity to

exercise the right to vote

equally to everyone irrespec-

tive of caste, creed and com-

erators to ensure that there are more. The big man who cheated India 10 years ago has been completely routed. The small man here in Telangana who cheated us five months ago has also been routed. The Prime Minister has been campaigning

no Central university, and no AIIMS.

"Come out, vote and show that we are responsible citizens. In a democracy, when politics decides everything, I think we division," he said.

Class X and XII exams

been dishing out step-motherly treatment to Telangana with
our franchise so that we can have the kind of government we want. I hope you voted for progress, decisive policies and for the people who have a vision and not those who want

#### **SNCN ACHARYULU**

Amidst claims and counterclaims by political parties about victory, the fate of the candidates and the verdict of the Telugu people were sealed in the EVMs on Monday. Polling was held on Monday for the 17 Lok Sabha seats in Telangana and the 175 Assembly and 25 Lok Sabha seats in Andhra Pradesh.

Candidates have to wait for 21 days to know the winner. The counting of votes will be taken up on June 4 and results will be declared on the same day.

In the Lok Sabha elections in Telangana, the main contest was between the Congress and the BJP. In Andhra Pradesh, in the Assembly and Lok Sabha elections, the main fight was between the YSR Congress and the TDP alliance

Candidates are now collecting details about the voting at the ground level from their party activists to assess their winning chances. There will not be any big political changes in Telangana due to the election results as polls



were held only to the Lok

But the situation in Andhra Pradesh is different as in AP elections were held to the Assembly also along with the Lok Sabha elections. Politics can change depending on the results of the Assembly election in

Andhra Pradesh. It appears that the ruling YSR Congress and the opposition alliance headed by the TDP are in a tight race in the Assembly elections. The YSR Congress is confident of

retaining power. At the same time, the TDP is also confident about regaining its old

In Telangana, major political parties like the Congress, the BJP and the BRS are confident about winning most of the LS seats. But whichever party may win the LS elections there will be no change

in the state government. However, the LS election results may bring about changes in the BRS in Telangana and in the TDP in Andhra Pradesh.

#### 1.50 cr passengers travelled in TSRTC buses in just 2 days

**PNS** ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC) Managing Director VC Sajjanar said that 1.50 crore passengers have travelled to vote in their native places. The number of passengers has created a record in the

The corporation released press note on Monday, where it mentioned that the corporation arranged the buses and other facilities for the returning passengers.

Sajjanar said that the TSRTC has arranged special buses for those going to their home-



and other states.

#### Girls surpass boys in CBSE towns for voting in the State

Girls surpassed boys with a pass percentage of 99.64 while boys secured pass percentage of 99.48 in Class XII in the CBSE exams the results of which were declared by the board on Monday.
In Class XII, Trivandrum

PNS HYDERABAD

secured 99.91 per cent, whereas Vijayawada region (that includes Andhra Pradesh and Telangana) secured 99.04 per cent. Girls scored 91.25 per cent and boys scored 85.21 per cent. The same follows for the Class X examination. Trivandrum secured 99.75 per cent while Vijayawada region



secured 99.60 per cent. A total of 45,669 students, including 25,010 boys and 20,659 girls, appeared for the CBSE Class X examination. In terms of pass percentage, boys scored 99.48 and girls 99.64.

Compared to last year, the

overall pass percentage of Class XII students increased by 0.65 per cent as against 87.33 per cent last year.

Meanwhile, most of the CBSE-affiliated schools in Telangana have reportedly secured 100 percentile.

#### **Odisha CEO directs police to arrest** polling staff for 'dereliction of duty'

disha's Chief Electoral Officer Nikunja Bihari Dhal on Monday suspended three polling officials and directed the police to arrest two of them for "serious dereliction of duty" Speaking to reporters, Dhal said, "We have directed the Ganjam collector to suspend three presiding officers of three polling booths and arrest two of them for serious dereliction of duty." The presiding officer of polling booth number 193 in Gopalpur

assembly constituency has been put under suspension while the presiding officers of booth numbers 27 and 163 in Chatrapur assembly segment in Ganjam district have been suspended and police were directed to arrest them, he said. Earlier in the day, the CEO suspended one polling official in Narla assembly constituency in Kalahandi district and another in Chikiti assembly seat in Ganjam district. So far, five polling officials have been suspended after they were engaged in senior misconduct during the election, officials said



#### **Another NEET aspirant goes missing** from Kota's coaching hub

early a week after a NEET aspirant left his PG room here with Rs 8,000 in his pocket, another 19-year-old preparing for the medical entrance exam in Kota has gone missing. Bihar native Aman Kumar Singh, who had been preparing for the entrance exam in the coaching hub for the last two years, left his paying guest room in Swarn Vihar colony on the intervening night of May 11 and 12, police said

Singh left a note behind in which he said that he couldn't do well in the NEET exam and won't be able to crack it, they said. On May 6, Rajasthan native Rajendra Prasad Meena (19) went missing from his PG room here. He sent a text message to his parents saying that he did not want to study any further and was leaving home for five years. Meena wrote that he had Rs 8,000 with him and would contact his family or other relatives if need be



#### **Recklessly driven Delhi Police vehicle** mows down man, cop held

58-year-old man was mowed down allegedly by a recklessly driven Delhi Police vehicle in Sarojini Nagar area here on Monday, police said. A PCR call regarding the Avenicie in Sarojini Nagar alea ilele un Montagy, police station, Deputy incident was received at 3.27 am, at Sarojini Nagar police station, Deputy Commissioner of Police (southwest) Rohit Meena said. We got information that a Delhi Police vehicle was involved in the accident and one person was seriously injured, Meena

said. A team was rushed to the spot near Bhikaji Cama Place Metro Station where they found a Delhi Police vehicle in a damaged condition, he said. The man killed in the accident was later identified as Baijnath. "An FIR was registered and the driver of the offending vehicle, constable Pardeep Kumar, posted at Rajinder police station, has been arrested," the DCP said. Further investigation into the matter has been started, police said, adding that Baijnath is a resident of Trilokpuri.



## FM: Is Cong aware of cost of Rahul's 'Khata Khat' schemes?

PNS NEW DELHI

BJP leader and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday wondered whether the Congress is aware of the cost of implementing the social welfare schemes, including giving Rs 1 lakh to women belonging to below poverty line families

A lot has been said in recent times about the fiscal management (especially on debt) of our government under PM Modi's leadership, Sitharaman said in a post on X.

"Many times, absolute numbers have been compared without considering the GDP growth on which we base the debt calculation. I would like to put out a clear picture, unlike @INCIndia, which hides behind lofty promises that are non-transparent and disconnected from reality," it

"Has @INCIndia considered the cost of the lofty promises

made in their manifesto? Have they calculated how much the 'Khata Khat' schemes will cost fiscally? Will they borrow substantially for them, or will they raise taxes to fund them?"

She wondered how many welfare schemes would Rahul Gandhi shut down to accommodate the fiscal cost of the khata khat' schemes.

Last month, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi while addressing a poll rally made a poll promise saying that the party will transfer Rs 1 lakh in the account of one woman from every poor household in the country if they win the elec-

"Would @RahulGandhi care to answer these real questions and explain how their gigantic schemes of fiscal splurge would work without increasing taxes or borrowing heavily and running down the economy?

Here's a challenge to him to answer these questions for the people of India," she said.

The truth is that the BJP government's fiscal management is much better than that of the UPA, despite facing Covid-19 pandemic in which substantial resources were used for relief efforts, the FM said.

During the UPA rule from FY04 to FY14, she said, central government debt, including external debt at current values, grew about 3.2 times, from Rs 18.74 lakh crore in March 2004 to Rs 58.59 lakh crore in March 2014.

This increase was much greater than the 2.9 times growth from Rs 58.59 lakh crore in FY14 to Rs 172.37 lakh crore in FY24 (RE), she said, adding, this lower increase between FY 2014 and FY 2024 occurred despite the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, where the Centre borrowed to provide relief to those in need even

#### Don't play with self-respect of Bengal's women, Mamata to Modi

PNS ■ BONGAON (WB)

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi not to play with the self-respect and dignity of women of the state by making "false claims" about atrocities.

Addressing an election meeting at Bongaon, the TMC supremo said Modi should keep in mind that the situation of West Bengal is not like BJP-ruled states.

"Don't play with the selfrespect of women, don't hatch conspiracy by playing with the dignity of our mothers and sisters," she said.

The prime minister in his public meetings on Sunday alleged that the TMC was trying to hide its past misdeeds in Sandeshkhali where TMC leaders were accused of sexual assault and land grab.

However, in a recently surfaced purported video, a BJP leader of Sandeshkhali was heard saying that the protests

## India looking for additional sites for Russian N-reactors'

PNS MUMBAI

India is looking for additional sites for Russian nuclear reactors, while the discussion with the French on the proposed Jaitapur nuclear power plant project is underway, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Monday.

Responding to a question on nuclear collaboration with foreign countries not taking off as expected, Jaishankar said the manner in which the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act 2010, was framed required a lot of interaction with foreign suppliers to see how their concerns could be addressed.

"This has taken some time and that applies to some countries," he said in an apparent reference to the US companies, at a press conference in Mumbai.

He said with regard to some other countries where the liability issue is better understood or they don't have the same degree of concern, because the nature of their



industry is very different.

We have discussions underway where Kudankulam (by the Russians) has progressed. We are actually looking at additional sites for Russian reactors. With regards to the French we have ongoing discussions with them," Jaishankar said.

The External Affairs Minister was in Russia last December when the two sides signed some "very important" agreements related to the construction of the future powergenerating units of the Kudankulam nuclear power

Russia has built four nuclear power plants of 1,000 MW each at Kudankulam and two more reactors of the same capacity are being built. It is the largest nuclear park in the country.

India signed nuclear deals with the US and French in 2008. Post these agreements, Mithi Virdhi and Kovadda were earmarked for the US and Jaitapur for the French.

However, the projects did not take off as expected due to several factors one of which was the stringent clauses of the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damages Act 2010.

## Plea in SC seeks review of **EVM VVPAT verdict**

PNS NEW DELHI

A plea has been filed in the Supreme Court seeking review of its April 26 judgement by which it had rejected the paper ballot system and the complete cross-verification of votes cast using EVMs with a Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT).

The review petition was filed by Arun Kumar Agrawal, who had filed the PIL on the issue earlier, through lawyer Neha Rathi. The review plea filed on May 10 said, "There are mistakes and errors apparent on the face of the impugned order..., and as such there are sufficient reasons which require review of the impugned order/judgment...

The petitioner respectfully seeks review on the following



issues as have been dealt with in judgment dated April 26, 2024: i) Feasibility of counting of all VVPAT paper slips in terms of time to be taken and additional manpower, ii) Vulnerability of SLU (symbol loading units) and iii) Percentage of VVPAT slips counted for tallying with EVM votes after Chandrababu

Naidu...Judgment."

Balance to be struck to ensure

vehicles comply with PUC: SC

sibility of counting of all VVPAT paper slips in terms of time to be taken and additional manpower and referred to the relevant portion of the judgement.

meet with an accident, the victim do not get the

and strictest possible norms should be put in,

for example if the vehicle does not have PUC,

apex court as an amicus curiae in the pollution

matter, said this issue can be referred to the

Commission of Air Quality Management

A balance has to be struck

between both," the bench said,

Mehta said, in case of an acci-

He said PUC norms must be complied with

Senior advocate Aparajita Singh, assisting the

The plea dealt with the fea-

compensation".

don't give petrol.

(CAQM), an expert body.

ing, it was suggested that instead of physically counting the VVPAT slips, they can be counted by a counting machine. This suggestion, including the suggestion that bar-coding of the symbols loaded in the VVPATs may be helpful in machine counting, may be examined by the ECI," the top court had said in the

Seeking physical counting, the plea said the counting of all

VVPAT slips can be done "accurately with a fraction of the employees and at a fraction of cost and within five to eight

## 'Modi govt 'anti-MSME', small businesses shut down'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Monday accused the Narendra Modiled central government of being "anti-MSME" and alleged that thousands of small businesses have shut down in the past 10 years.

Congress leader Jairam claimed that the vita MSME sector accounts for 30 per cent of GDP, 40 per cent of exports and employs 12 crore

"However, the small businesses of India have spent 10 years suffering in this 'anyay kaal' through neglect or through malicious anti-MSME policies. It is a well-established fact that Narendra Modi has spent the last decade working

friends," he said in a series of posts on X.

"As a result, MSMEs have contributed to the lowest fraction of GDP in decades, face the highest tax rates in decades. and are dealing with severe job losses and price rise. Thousands of MSMEs have been shutting down," he added

The Congress general secretary pointed to six major issues relating to "Modi-made MSME mismanagement", which include demonetisation that, he said, affected MSMEs the most and "shoddy" implementation of the GST regime.

Citing reasons for small businesses shutting down, Ramesh alleged that policies



reports citing a survey said 72 per cent of MSMEs have been stagnant since the past five

conceived Income Tax 45-day payment rule", uncontrolled dumping of Chinese goods, and the MSME board being captured by "BJP cronies". His remarks came after

Elaborating further, the Congress leader claimed that eight years after demonetisation, "it has become clear that demonetisation did nothing to curb black money or counterfeit currency in İndia".

"Unable to pay employees or repay their debts, many small businesses were forced to close. from smaller firms to bigger, more organised players. An RBI study has shown that MSMEs were the worst affected by demonetisation," he added.

"Overall growth cratered after demonetisation and has not recovered since then. Even before the pandemic, India's GDP growth rate was at a 10year low in 2019. This policy

blunder shows the BJP's misplaced priorities and lack of concern for small businesses, he alleged.

The implementation of GST was another instance where the BJP failed to consider how policv changes would impact MSMEs, Ramesh said.

The Congress leader said espite the various issues faced by the MSME sector, policies are made only for "crony industrialists". Ramesh alleged the electoral bonds "scam" also affected MSMEs and said, "Having taken Rs 8,000 crore from large corporates as electoral bonds 'chanda (donation)', the BJP's quid-pro-quo only extends to those large corporates who can afford to pay

#### '*Ab jaldi karni padegi*,' Rahul Gandhi replies to question on marriage

PNS RAE BARELI (UP)

Addressing a rally in Rae Bareli parliamentary constituency for the first time after his nomination, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday faced a familiar query. When is he getting married? Soon, he assured.

As he ended his speech, Gandhi called his sister Priyanka Gandhi Vadra to the front of the dais.

Putting his hand on her shoulders and fondly touching her face, Gandhi expressed his appreciation for her efforts in the Rae Bareli campaign. "I am touring different parts of the country in the election



and my sister is spending time here, a big thanks to her for this," he said.

Priyanka Gandhi then told him to answer the question somebody from the crowd had asked. He asked what the

question was. "Shaadi kab karoge (When will you marry)," somebody asked. Rahul, who will be 54 next

#### **Chhattisgarh: 14 Naxalites** arrested in Bijapur district

Fourteen Naxalites, including 11 carrying a cumulative bounty of Rs 41 lakh on their heads, were arrested in Chhattigarh's Bijapur district, a police official said on Monday. These ultras, comprising six women and eight men, were part of the outlawed Left Wing movement's 'military company number 2' and 'Gangaloor area committee', the official said.

They were held on Sunday from forests of Mutvendi and Pidia villages under Gangaloor police station limits by a joint team of the District Reserve Guard (DRG) and district police, a statement from Bijapur police said. "Eleven of the 14 Naxalites

were carrying cumulative reward of Rs 41 lakh. These include Renu Kovasi, a member of military company number 2, and Mangli Avlam of Gangaloor area committee with reward of Rs 8 lakh each," the release said.

"Gangaloor area committee members Bichchem Uika, Sharmila Kursam and Lakshmi Tati were carrying rewards of Rs 5 lakh each. Four cadres were having bounties of Rs 2 lakh each and two had rewards of Rs 1 lakh each," it added. Based on their questioning, four tiffin bombs, two cooker bombs, detonators, cordex wire, gelatin sticks, firecrackers and other Maoistsrelated materials concealed by them were recovered, the release

## India-France military exercise Shakti begins

month, assured it will have to

be soon now. "Ab jaldi karni

padegi," he said in Hindi.

PNS NEW DELHI

The seventh edition of the 'Exercise Shakti' between India and France began in Meghalaya on Monday with an aim to enhance joint military capability of both sides to undertake multi-domain operations in a sub-conventional scenario, the defence ministry

also seeks to enhance the level of defence cooperation between the two friendly nations and boost their bilat-

Exercise Shakti, being held from May 13-26, will enable the two sides to share their best practices in tactics, techniques and procedures of conducting joint operations, the Ministry of Defence said in a statement.

Tactical drills to be practiced during the exercise will include response to a terrorist action of capturing a defined territory, setting up of a joint command post, establishment of an intelligence and surveillance centre, securing a helipad or landing site, small team insertion and

extraction, special heliborne operations, cordon and search operations besides employment of drones and counterdrone systems among others, it

Exercise Shakti is a biennial training event conducted alternatively in India and France. The last edition was

November 2021.

The seventh edition of the exercise commenced on Monday at Umroi, in a fully developed and modern foreign training node in Meghalaya.

"The joint exercise will facilitate developing inter-operability, bonhomie and camaraderie between armed forces personnel of the two countries. This will also enhance the level of defence cooperation, further fostering bilateral relations between the two friendly nations," the statement said.



ance companies.
"What happens is, for want of PUC, 55 per cent vehicles as per our survey are uninsured," Mehta said, adding, "55 per cent of the vehicles, as per the survey conducted by the Government

of India, are uninsured meaning thereby if they

The Supreme Court on Monday said prima facie

a right balance will have to be struck for ensur-

ing that vehicles remain compliant with pollu-

tion under control (PUC) norms and, at the

Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan came while hearing an

application seeking modification of the apex

court's August 10, 2017 order, which said the

The observation by a bench of Justices A S

same time, have third party insurance.

insurance companies will not

insure a vehicle unless it has a

valid PUC certificate on the date of renewal of insurance

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the General Insurance Council, said under



dent, the owner of a vehicle may not have the money to pay even if the suit is decreed while in case of an insurance company, the firm is bound. The bench noted it has been pointed out by

to get compensation. Prima facie, we are of the view that a right balance will have to be struck for ensuring that vehicles remain compliant with PUC norms but, at the same time, all vehicles must have third party insurance," the bench said.

The joint military exercise

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PAPER WITH PASSION

#### **Frenemies**

India seeks to neutralise China's economic hold but it beats US to become India's biggest trading partner

In the realm of global economics, the dynamics of trade relationships often override geopolitics. India's growing trade affinity with China is a living example of that: China has become India's largest trading partner in 2023-24. This development brings little joy to the nation aspiring to become an alternative to China and striving to bolster its manufacturing sector, with the Prime Minister's 'Make in India' call. Despite the Indian Government's rhetoric urging caution in dealings with China, economic imperatives seem to be reshaping the contours of bilateral trade. Their trade relationship has long been characterised by a mix of competition and cooperation. Both nations are regional powerhouses with vast consumer markets and burgeoning manufacturing sectors, though China is much ahead of India in terms of economy and infrastructure size. Over the years, China has emerged as a crucial supplier of goods to the world, including India, ranging from electronics and machinery to pharmaceuticals and textiles. Concurrently, India



has also found a receptive market for its exports in China, particularly in sectors like raw materials, agricultural products and IT services. But the real problem is the lopsidedness of the trade. We are a net importer of Chinese goods, that too at the cost of our local industry.

Most traders take the easy import route, often substandard but cheap, and make decent profits. This leads to job losses and closure of several MSME manufacturing units. Besides, the nations are not the best of neighbours; relying on China in this scenario is indeed fraught with danger. But where wealth flows, interests follow and that explains India's rising trade ties with

China. The trajectory of bilateral trade has been influenced by several factors. One, the sheer size and harmony of their economies create natural synergies to drive trade volumes. Despite occasional border disputes and geopolitical issues, economic pragmatism often prevails, fostering trade ties. Two, China's manufacturing prowess and cost competitiveness have made it an attractive destination for Indian importers, especially in sectors where domestic production struggles to meet demand. Moreover, the persistent trade deficit with China underscores India's reliance on their goods and highlights the challenges in achieving more equitable trade ties. The geopolitical dimension of India-China trade cannot be overlooked either. The Indian Government must emphasise the need for strategic autonomy and self-reliance in key sectors. Initiatives such as 'Make in India' and Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) must be given further fillip. Additionally, efforts to diversify trade partnerships by nurturing ties with countries like the US, Japan and Australia must be accorded priority and a diversified trade portfolio maintained. Achieving a fundamental rebalancing of India-China trade dynamics is a multifaceted challenge that requires nuanced handling and necessitates a calibrated and pragmatic policy approach.



Flamingoes at the Thol Bird Sanctuary in Mehsana district

Regime change on cards in Nepal?

ASHOK K MEHTA



Amid strained India-Nepal relations, speculation swirls around a potential regime change in Nepal

epal's late Foreign Minister Rishikesh Shah would say that Kathmandu is the rumour capital of the world and also the fount of speculation. Our own Madhuri Dikshit once hailed Nepal as a beautiful country adding: "We're lucky it is part of India". This created a furore but the story appeared with tasteful embellishments in Nepal. Delhi's Chief Minister Madan Lal Khurana waxed eloquent about the sterling qualities of Nepalis working in India and what great servants they made. This led to fireworks in Nepal and bush telegraphy produced several ugly distortions. Hrithik Roshan never said he did not like Nepalese but Indian films were banned and other collateral damage followed. India is usually at the receiving end of Nepal's woes and wrath.

China has begun to feature negatively only recently. India-bashing was at its peak following the economic blockade in 2015 and the rekindling of border dispute when Kalapani, LipuLekh and Limpiyadhura were incorporated into Nepal's map after India included Kalapani in a new map. Chinese Ambassador Hou Yanxi who made her mark rough-shodding Nepalese politicians was targeted by the Indian media. Yanxi became central to a duel between Indian and Nepalese media. How poorly informed political class. celebrities and even the media about Nepal were apparent. This longish backgrounder is a necessary prelude to describe last week's rumour and speculation about another attempt at regime change in Nepal. The report about the split in JSP (N) took place when its supremo, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Health and Population Upendra Yadav was visiting the US. The story goes that NC leader Sher Bahadur Deuba attempted to topple the Left coalition led by Prachanda by rawing out Yaday (12 lawmak ers) and Madhav Nepal of Unified Socialists (10 lawmakers). 20 plus lawmakers are necessary for the NC-led Democratic Alliance to make a comeback. The attempt failed as UML's KP Oli preempted the plan by splitting JSP(N) by



getting former colleague and lawmaker Ashok Rai to walk away from Yadav with seven of 12 lawmakers. The inside story is different: Yadav had plans to overwhelm numerically the Hill Nepalese with Madhesis in the approaching party national convention. This upset the Hill and Madhesis members unhappy with Yadav. Rai approached the Election Commission and registered a new party JSP sans N for Nepal. Yadav has decided to fight the Rai faction in court. Rai has pledged support for Prachanda. Reports about Deuba's deal vary: offering Yadav Premiersĥip and/or a shared term with Madhav Nepal. This deal too fizzled out as Unified Socialists were already divided between two former PMs, Nepal and Ihalanath Khanal. India figured in the regime change as Deuba. Operation Topple requires either RSP (21 law-

COUNTRIES AS UNILATERALISM HAS CREPT **NEIGHBOURHOOD** makers) or JSP(N) and Unified Socialists together to desert the DIPLOMACY. ruling dispensation. The kingmaker for this great game is the WHILE NEPAL HAS CPN Maoists with 31 lawmak-DONE A TIT-FOR-TAT ers that both NC and UML would need to stay in power. OVER THE MAP, The threat to the Prachandaled coalition will lurk in the CHINA HAS nooks and corners of UNILATERALLY Parliament posed by parties with double-digit strength.

modicum of political stability. It has been blocking parliamentary proceedings for more than a month over the cooperative fund fraud in which Home

MIND GAMES

**PLAYED** 

IN BOTH

ARE REGULARLY

CHANGED THE LAC

declare a truce to infuse a

Minister Rabi Lamichhane, RSP is involved. It has demanded a parliamentary probe into the alleged wrongdoings of Lamichhane. Prachanda has agreed to an enquiry in which others involved in the scam are also investigated. Parliament resumed after a short recess but NC is not allowing it to function. The budget has to be passed shortly and maybe the government will be forced to take the ordinance route.In India too it is time for regime change but through the world's longest election process. The BJP excels in toppling opposition governments with Operation Lotus. India has played a pivotal role in introducing democracy and its restoration in Nepal. Foreign Minister Jaishankar who has become a rock star in the election campaign is sharing pearls of wisdom on every conceivable subject, especially India's Neighbourhood First Policy. He said that politics may go up or down in the neighbourhood but India is regarded as a

friend by the people. Later, he

admitted that in diplomacy as

in business there are setbacks

- it's part of the game. The latest setback in India-Nepal relations is the resurfacing of the festering border dispute. Having incorporated it in its state emblem the government has ordered the new map to be printed on Rs 100 bank notes about which Jaishankar observed that Nepal unilaterally took some measures but they can't change reality on the ground, adding 'discussions are ongoing through an established platform. As far as is known, no discussion has taken place. For Prachanda and Oli, nationalism is the magic mantra. When Prachanda came to India on an official visit last June during the joint press statement, PM Modi said that the border dispute would be resolved through a joint mechanism. Strangely this fact was not mentioned in the press release of the joint statement. Mind games are regularly played in both countries as unilateralism has crept into neighbourhood diplomacy. While Nepal has done a tit-for-tat over the map, China has unilaterally changed the LAC with India

General, was Commander, IPKF South, Sri Lanka, and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff. The views expressed are

## SC judgments have strengthened democracy



Democratic spectacle owes its strength and boldness to a series of landmark legal judgments that have fortified its foundations

lections, serving as the cornerstone of democracy, offer a platform for citizens to voice their opinions, hold leaders accountable, and actively engage in shaping the future of their nation. In India, elections transcend mere political proceedings; they evolve into grand festivals, embodying the collective will and aspirations of over a billion people. India's electoral odyssey, marked by its vast scale, diversity, and intricacy, has been fortified by a series of seminal legal rulings. These decisions have been instrumental in shaping and reinforcing the democratic framework of India, ensuring fairness, transparency, and inclusivity in the electoral process. Among the plethora of cases that demonstrate the resilience of the legal system, five stand out as pillars that have fortified India's electoral journey.

**Fundamental Right to Vote:** At the core of India's electoral democracy lies the fundamental right to vote, enshrined in the Constitution. Over time, the judiciary has steadfastly upheld and safeguarded this right through



case of Mohinder Singh Gill v. The Chief Election Commissioner, the Supreme Court of India unequivocally affirmed that the right to vote is sacrosanct and any arbitrary deprivation of this right is unconstitutional.

The crux of this case revolved around assessing the constitutional validity of electoral laws that might encroach upon the fundamental right

Electoral Reforms and Transparency: Ensuring transparency and accountability in the electoral process has been an ongoing endeavour, guided by judicial interventions aimed at curbing malpractices and fostering electoral integrity. The 2002 case of Association for Democratic Reforms v. Union of India marked a significant milestone in this journey. This case presented the chal-

lenge of reconciling the right to privacy of political candiand fostering social justice in dates with the public's right to information, necessitating a delicate balance between transparency in electoral processes and individual privacy rights.

and Minority Rights: The diverse social fabric of India underscores the necessity for inclusive representation and safeguarding minority rights in the electoral arena. Legal judgments have played a pivotal role in upholding these principles and ensuring equitable participation for all segments of society. The 1991 case of Indra Sawhney v. Union of India, commonly known as the Mandal Commission case, stands as a testament to this commit-

ment. This case grappled with the challenge of affirmative action and reservation policies, striking a balance between equitable representation of marginalised communities and the principles of meritocracy enshrined in the Indian Constitution. The landmark judgment underscored the commitment to inclusive representation, empowering

and fostering social justice in the electoral process.

**Effective Electoral Disputes** Resolution: Efficient resolution of electoral disputes is indispensable for upholding the sanctity of elections and **Inclusive Representation** fostering public trust in the democratic process. This judgment bolstered the credibility of the electoral process, ensuring expeditious and impartial resolution of disputes.

Safeguarding Electoral Rights and Freedoms: Preserving electoral rights and freedoms is paramount for the integrity of the electoral process. Legal judgments have been instrumental in protecting these rights and holding authorities accountable for any infringements. The 2015 case of Mohd. Sattar v. State of Rajasthan serves as a poignant example. The judgment reaffirmed the principle of universal suffrage, ensuring that every citizen's voice s heard.

(The writer is corporate and legal advisor and founder of AŬ Corporate Advisory and Legal Services; views are

#### **ELECTION GUARANTEES**

NC, the single-largest party is

Madam — This election season in India is filled with a plethora of extended guarantees from different political parties and their renowned leaders. Initially, it was only PM Narendra Modi who extended oral guarantees termed as 'Modi ki Guarantee'. Now, to compete with him, recently released Delhi CM Arvind Keiriwal has also presented his list of 10 guarantees to script a 'new India'. However, Mr. Arvind made it clear that he didn't want to be the Prime Minister of India. Nevertheless, his support for the INDIA bloc has grown stronger, especially after he was sentenced to Tihar Jail by the apex court.

Elections have a historic relationship with political guarantees and promises. But we all already know how many of these guarantees are actually fulfilled. The irony is that people don't need guarantees to survive and ensure their well-being; instead, we need commitment and actions for the actual general welfare of every section of our society.Since Mr. Kejriwal is on interim bail until June 1st, considering the short duration of time he is outside the jail, he is trying his best to reach out to the maximum public with his statements, social media posts, press conference conversations, and other personal interactions with the countrymen to challenge the BJP in general and PM Modi in particular for his arrest during this peculiar time of elections. Now that it is a fight between the guarantees of the two biggest political parties, it is up to the people to decide whom they will choose in the tough fight of the Lok Sabha elec-

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

#### **CONTROVERSIAL CONTEST**

Madam — The Eurovision Western Music Contest has been held in various countries across Europe for the last 68 years. The youth there enjoy this competition, and spectators and music lovers are often seen in a dancing mood throughout the event. However, this year's event, which concluded late on Saturday night, can be termed in history'. as the most political, controversial, chaot-



where elections have been completed in some places and others are still pending, it's crucial to acknowledge that not all leaders hoist the banner of public welfare. Merely casting a ballot doesn't guarantee the orchestration of effective governance. Instead of succumbing to the illusion that voting alone resolves everything, let's dispel such notions. The real-

ic, discriminatory, and tense event in its history. For this, we have to thank the security personnel of Sweden and the officials of Malmö city, who were ultimately successful in bringing this event to its destination. As a result, Swiss singer Nemo was declared the winner for his song

'The Code'. Otherwise, as soon as people came to know that Israeli singer Eden Golan had also been included in this competition, a round of protests started in the

It seemed as if Malmö, Sweden's thirdlargest city, had been divided into two parts, with 70 percent of people against Israel and 30 percent in favor of the Israeli singer. In the context of the ongoing war in Gaza, Dutch singer and contender Joost Klein was expelled from the competition due to

a backstage dispute. The world seems to be deeply divided due to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the Russian attack on Ukraine. England's daily 'The Telegraph' rightly ran the head-line 'This is the most poisonous Eurovision

Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

#### **Every vote counts** ity often reveals a different narrative, where

E EDITO

midst the dynamic political landscape,

power dynamics favour those with deep pockets and questionable tactics, leaving trust and resources in disarray. If you're still clinging to the belief that all politicians are solely motivated by altruism, it's a precarious innocence to maintain. However, rather than consigning voting to oblivion, let's approach it with discernment. Let's seek out candidates who sway to the tune of integrity and genuinely prioritize the welfare of the people. And let's not overlook the importance of advocating for electoral reforms, weaving a fabric of transparency, accountability, and fairness in the political sphere. Your vote, fellow citizens, carries weight, especially when interwoven with others who aspire to a more just and equitable society. Remember, in the intricate tapestry of democracy, every thread contributes to a brighter future for us all Imdadullah | Hyderabad

#### **KEJRIWAL'S ELECTIONEERING**

Madam — This is wtih reference to your Editorial "Wild card" (May 13). The national convenor of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Arvind Kejriwal will campaign in favour of the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) candidates across the country, Sandeep Pathak, the party's national general secretary said in a statement on Sunday, 12 May. Kejriwal will campaign in Lucknow on May 15, in Jamshedpur on May 16 and in Mumbai on May 17, he added. Kejriwal, who came out of Tihar Jail earlier this week, said he will work tirelessly and campaign across the country to end the "dictatorship" of the Modi government at the Centre. All the INDIA bloc constituents want Kejriwal to visit their states and campaign

for them. The Supreme Court has granted interim bail to the AAP leader to participate in the

Lok Sabha poll campaigning. Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

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#### **FIRST COLUMN** THE RISE OF **ROBOTS**

Robots are emerging as the next frontier, but can they replace humans?



SHAINY SHARMA

arious research and studies have shown that the next frontier in Artificial intelligence is the Robots. Much more added to it are the big names- Jeff Bezos, Microsoft and many others who are investing in human robots according to people with knowledge of the situation, as part of a scramble to find new applications for the so-called Al Technology. Undoubtedly, robots have increasingly become an integral part of our lives in this century, impacting various aspects of society, industry and everyday activities. The robots have revolutionized in many key sectors be it industrial, healthcare, agricultural, transportation or any other. The science of robots is revolutionizing day by day and scientists are making innovations in robots. Research studies show that by 2050, robots will overcome human beings as they will develop strong intel-

Many developing nations are involving the use of robots. In the industrial sector robots are performing the tasks such as assembling, welding, painting and packaging in factories thereby increasing efficiency, precision and productivity. In the healthcare sector, robots can perform tasks such as surgery, patient care, rehabilitation and medication dispensing with great precision and even provide support and assistance to elderly or disabled individuals. Talking about the automobile industry, autonomous vehicles- including cars, drones and delivery robots, are transforming transportation and logistics while self-driven car makers are promising to make transportation safer, more efficient and accessible to people who are unable to drive. In the agricultural sector, agricultural robots such as drones



and automated harvesters can help optimise farming practices by monitoring crops, applying fertilizers and pesticides precisely and thereby harvesting crops efficiently which ultimately improves yields, reduces labour costs and minimizes environmental impact. Not only these but the robots are doing jobs and servings in restaurants too. The robots have taken down the responsibility of the pizza boy in pizza shops and even are performing tasks such as customer service, cleaning, and inventory management. They enhance operational efficiency and provide novel experiences for customers.

Robots are indeed reshaping various aspects of everyone's lives, from how individuals work to how they interact with technology and each other. Today, educational robots are gaining an advantage in classrooms over teachers, engineering, and other STEM concepts in a hands-on manner.

Overall, robots are transforming the way we live, work and interact with the world around us. With advancements in robotics technology continuing to expand their capabilities and applications, the question of whether robots will replace humans in various tasks and roles is a complex one. While robots and automation have the potential to replace humans in some repetitive and routine tasks, they also create new opportunities and roles for humans in other areas. However, many tasks and roles require human creativity, empathy, and problem-solving skills, which are difficult for robots

There is no denying the fact that the evolution of robots will profoundly impact society, offering new opportunities for innovation, collaboration, and improving quality of life. However, it will also raise the important ethical, social and economic considerations that must be carefully addressed with time. As robotics technology continues to advance, it will further transform society and open new possibilities for innovation and human-machine collaboration.

(The writer is an educator, views are personal)

## The plight of unwed mothers of Kolam tribe



The stigmatisation of 'Kumari Matas' in the Kolam tribe highlights their struggle for social acceptance and economic empowerment



olam, a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) of the Dravidian race is known for its unique culture, language, indigenous knowledge and matrilineal society. They reside predominantly in the Yavatmal, Chandrapur, some parts of Amravati, Wardha and Nanded districts of Maharashtra and in some parts of Adilabad of Telangana. They have historical roots in Andhra Pradesh and later migrated to the regions of Vidarbha and Marathwada. This Proto- Australoid tribe is often highlighted for its unwed TRIBE, CLASSIFIED mothers. As per the reports of The Indian Express, there are at least 45 registered unwed mothers and over 450 unregistered unwed mothers only in the three blocks named Maregaon, Pandarkawada and JhariJamini of Yavatmal. Being a matriarchal society, the Kolams of Yavatmalhave always celebrated womanhood. They celebrate the first mensuration of girls: they worship "Gabhuri", the mother Goddess as their main deity to uphold their matriarchal societal roots. However, the situation is changing.

Though the unwed mothers have been renamed as the "KumariMaata" due to their assimilation with mainstream society yet due to their rising inclination towards the male-dominated society, patriarchal tenets are growing in these traditions. Therefore, the position of women is also declining consequently and those unwed mothers who used to live a normal life previously are now considered "Bad character women". There are various case studies and stories of women of the Kolam tribe where the elite in the society or financially stronger like contractors, outsiders visit the areas for work purposes, establish physical interactions with the women in their communities and refuse to marry them when they are expecting a child. Women are frequently conned by marriage promises because they are socially, emotionally and economically vulnerable. The woman is held liable for the premarital pregnancy, whereas the responsible males are exclud-



PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE TRIBAL GROUP

A SIGNIFICANT ISSUE OF UNWED EMPHASISING THE TO TACKLE THEIR COMPLEX SOCIO-CULTURAL

GRAPPLING WITH

MOTHERS, **URGENCY FOR** INTERVENTIONS ECONOMIC AND

ed from this process. Most of these Kolam women work

as agricultural labourers, construction labourers and other low-wage activities due to which it becomes very easy for the traders and other outsiders to abuse them physically. For example, according to Deshpande (2016) "border districts of Maharashtra, such as Chandrapur, Gadchiroli, Bhandara, Buldhana, Amravati, Nagpur and Gondia too have unwed mothers, the numbers in Yavatmal are higher because of its proximity to the chilli fields of AS A Telangana, where work (for the poor) is available throughout the year. A number of unwed mothers say they were lured by neighbouring state's men who promise marriage but left when they became pregnant."

being a minor v due to their backwardness. Though in most tribal societies, giving birth to a child is a biological phenomenon and hence considered pious but yet due to the assimilation with the conventional societies they are also recognizing childbirth as a structural process where the consent of society, kin and kith is necessary. These structural changes are pushing unwed mothers toward various other socio-cultural and economic problems.

The most important among these is that unwed mothers are not accepted within the community nor do they find any other groom, STRUGGLES as they are considered obscene. As a result, for the entire period of life, they serve as a single mother due to which the pressure of childbearing increases among them. The problems are more serious as being unwed mothers they often face disgrace in the newly constructed norms of patriarchal

leave the village and stay in the outskirts whereas in many cases the other women are not allowed to talk to them or join them for any occasion, as they are believed to be malignant due to their premarital physical relations. The consequences are economic and occupational also. As a daily wage labourer, their leisure time is very little but being single mothers they need breaks for breastfeeding and childcare due to which they face pay cuts. Sometimes they need to pay a fine to the panchayats also

for their "misconduct". These unknown pregnancies among the women of Kolam are a crucial issue.

These indicate the lack of awareness about contraceptive measures, education, economic weakness and social vulnerability that Some of them get pregnant while often attract these women to fake marriage conversations and other luring proposals. As per the report of Sant Gadge Baba Amravati University (2018-2019) in Yavatmal, "28.84 per cent Kumari Matas are in the age range of 26 to 30 years.36 per

centKumariMatas having education up to Fourth standard, 67.30 per cent Kumari Matas are belonging to 'Kolam' caste, 82.69 per cent are homeless. 51.09 per cent are pregnant due to outsiders, 82.07 per cent children of Kumari Matas are admitted in the school by furnishing the name of mother only, 92.30 per cent had delivery at home,61.63 per cent getting help from Government schemes".

The subject is more critical as many of them are uncounted because most of them do not come forward to speak due to socio-cultural stigma and thus their stories remain untold. This has again a negative impact on them as their complete family details are not mentioned in the Government society. Sometimes they need to records like ration cards, Aadhar

cards, etc. which deprives them of getting the benefits of many Government schemes that can make their life easier.

As per the report of Pune Times Mirror, "a survey of such victims is conducted every year by a woman and child development (WCD) officer with the help of Anganwadi workers and a junior protection officer at the taluka level." Further, the Anganwadi workers help these unwed mothers by teaching them the methods of nutrition and hygiene. The Bombay High Court has already directed the state to the need for the rehabilitation of young unwed mothers among the Kolam tribe. The Government of Kerala is also running a similar kind of scheme called "Snehasparsham" which offers unwed mothers ?1000/per month to lessen the financial ırden of these economically vul nerable unwed mothers. The need of the hour is to initiate some projects and schemes for them so the Kumari Matas of Yavatmala can be included in the parameters of Government benefits at a large

The infrastructural facilities like schools and primary health care centres, are the basic needs of these regions. Endeavours should also be taken to open basic schools and training centres for vocational courses like sewing, beautician, etc. The awareness about Self-Self-help groups can make them financially independent through various micro-level businesses like horticulture, bee-keeping, jelly-making etc. Further, documentation of unwed mothers can give them a social identity and make them live a life of dignity and self-respect.

> (The writer is Vice Chancellor, Central Tribal University of Andhra Pradesh; views are personal)

## Kejriwal's bail: Unveiling political prophecies post-release

The Delhi CM's release sparks controversy with ominous predictions and bold political statements, fuelling nationwide debate on democracy's future

Persons accused of criminal cases getting arrested and the courts granting them bail is nothing new. Even if the person happens to be the reigning chief minister of a State or a former union minister of finance, the bail does not absolve the accused of the charges. The Supreme Court order that released the Delhi Chief Minister on bail from the custody of the Enforcement Directorate says it is a provisional arrangement so that he could participate in the election campaign as the Lok Sabha poll comes once in

five years. So far, so good. But what came after the Delhi Chief Minister was released on bail needs to be analyzed thread-



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

Temple and addressed a press meeting. What he said during the press meeting is shocking and capable of causing fear in the minds of the people. He said if the BJP wins the 2024 Lok Sabha election and comes back to power, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will send all Opposition leaders to jail. Kejriwal also claimed that Amit Shah is being groomed

when he turns 75. Yet another disclosure made by the Delhi Chief Minister was that Yogi Adityanath would be removed as chief minister of Uttar Pradesh within two months of the BJP coming back to power.

The national and international media are celebrating Kejriwal's bail and his prophecies. A major section of the media forgot the fact that they were the ones to give running commentaries of Live events without joining the game as players. The media in Kerala and Tamil Nadu are on Cloud Nine reporting that there is going to be a change of Government at the Centre after 4 June 2024. Well, let's leave it to the voters who are in the process of electing their that doubts about tampering the electronic voting machines have taken a stage and the Opposition leaders have started working on the modalities of Government formation. Saturday's press meeting by the Delhi Chief Minister took one

to 2019 when the same had claimed that if the BJP wins the General Election and returns to power, there would not be any more elections in India. "The 2019 General Election would be the last poll the country will see if Narendra Modi returns to power," these were the words of Kejriwal in

After the 2019 general election, Narendra Modi returned to power with a larger majority and the country saw regular bare. On Saturday, he wor-shipped at Lord Anjaneya Modi is likely to retire in 2025 in the process of electing their elections to all the State assem-condemned to repeat it"? shipped at Lord Anjaneya Modi is likely to retire in 2025 representatives. It is good to see

mandatory five-year tenure. Though the claim fell flat on all fours, neither the media that flashed Kejriwal's warning about the "last" general elections nor our political pundits remembered the same.

Once the results were announced and the BJP was returned to power, that became the news, and everything else was forgotten (at least till 2024).

Yet another battlefront has been opened by the Opposition and that is the One Nation, One Leader concept, the brand new slogan coined by Kejriwal. Wasn't it George Santayana, the Spanish-American philosopher who said in 1863 that "those who cannot remember the past are

does know this adage quite well and hence there is no possibility of following the slogan coined by Kejriwal.

The entire media in the country is unanimous in their opinion that elections are the festivals of democracy. But the festivals will certainly lose their charm if they are fueled by half-lies and full lies. One is at a loss to understand the logic behind the claim by certain leaders that the BJP government would subvert the Constitution!

Who derailed the Constitution much against the order of the Supreme Court that the basic structure of the Constitution should never be tampered with. It was in 1976 that then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi altered the preamble of the Constitution by incorporating

the words secularism, socialism etc. India survived as a nation from 1947 to 1976 without the terms secularism and socialism in its Constitution. B R Ambedkar, the architect of the Constitution, was totally against the inclusion of these terms when it was drafted for the first time. It was after the introduction of these terms that communal riots and terrorism peaked in India.

Accusations and allegations are fine because they add to the intensity of the campaigning. But baseless allegations rob the beauty of the election process. Interestingly, the leaders named by the Delhi chief minister as potential victims of the Modi regime are not saints or beatified ones. Reports from Delhi say that Kejriwal

was summoned eight or nine times by the ED for questioning in connection with money laundering. The Chief Minister chose to ignore the same with contempt. He might not know the truth that the reigning Prime Minister cooperated with the Supreme Court-appointed Special Investigation Team under the chairmanship of R K Raghavan, a former CBI director to grill him about the Gujarat riots. For 19 hours, the then Gujarat Chief Minister sat through the grilling and answered all the queries they asked. That is what we call honesty and integrity. People still hope that Kejriwal too is honest.

> (The writer is special corre*spondent with The Pioneer;* views are personal)

#### **Gold falls Rs 100; silver slumps** Rs 300 amid weak global cues

old prices fell Rs 100 to Rs 73,150 per 10 grams in the national capital on Monday Gamid a decline in precious metal rates in the international markets, according to HDFC Securities. The yellow metal had closed at Rs 73,250 per 10 grams in the previous session. Silver prices were also slumped Rs 300 to Rs 85,200 per kg. In the previous close, it had settled at Rs 85,500 per kg. "Spot gold prices (24 carats) in the Delhi markets are trading at Rs 73,150 per 10 grams, down by Rs 100 against the previous close," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

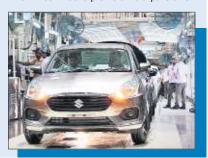
In the global markets, spot gold at Comex was trading at US\$ 2,347 per ounce, down US\$ 13 from the previous close. "Gold resumed trading on a weaker note as traders trimmed their positions ahead of the crucial US inflation report. "The US producer price index (PPI) is set to be released on Tuesday, followed by the consumer price index (CPI) on Wednesday, which will further provide more insights for the precious metal prices," Gandhi said.



#### Suzuki says will continue to expand SUV portfolio in India

apanese car maker Suzuki Motor Corporation on Monday said it will continue to expand SUV portfolio in India to recover its overall market share in the passenger vehicle segment. The company, which currently has around 58 per cent stake in Maruti Suzuki India, said its net sales increased by 732.6 billion yen (15.8 per cent) year-on-year to 5,374.3 billion yen for the last financial year. Operating profit increased by 115 billion yen (32.8 per cent) YoY to 465.6 billion yen. "We will continue to promote the expansion of

our SUV models (in India) and aim to recover our total passenger car share, Suzuki Motor Corporation said in a statement. Currently, Maruti Suzuki sells SUV (sport utility vehicle) models like Brezza, Jimny and Grand Vitara in the domestic market. The company's market share has come down to around 42 per cent from over 50 per cent a couple of years back in the domestic passenger vehicle segment on account of limited options in the SUV segment.



#### **Piramal Group arm invests Rs 600 cr** in microlender Annapurna Fin

iramal Alternatives on Monday announced a Rs 600 crore investment for an Pundisclosed stake in microfinance company Annapurna Finance. The investment includes a secondary stake buy from an existing shareholder and also providing includes a secondary stake buy from an existing shareholder and also providing it with the non-core tier-II capital, a company statement said. It did not specify the stake bought or share a break-up of how the Rs 600 crore investment amount is divided. The "structured

capital solution" is aimed at fuelling the riskcalibrated growth in Annapurna's assets under management, the statement said. Odishaheadquartered Annapurna had an AUM of US\$ 1.25 billion as of March 31, 2024. It has a presence through 1,372 branches in 20 states and also lends to small micro, small and medium businesses. "Microfinance as a retail asset class has grown at a CAGR (compound annual growth rate) of 32 per cent over the last decade and is expected to continue the high growth trajectory," Kalpesh Kikani, the chief executive officer of Piramal Alternatives, said



#### **CHABAHAR PORT OPERATION**

## India, Iran sign long term bilateral contract

PNS NEW DELHI

India and Iran on Monday signed a 10-year contract for the operation of a terminal at the strategically important Chabahar port in Iran, a move that will boost regional connectivity as well as trade ties.

This is the first time India will take over the management of an overseas port that will also have a multiplier effect on trade among India, Iran and Afghanistan as efforts continue to directly tap the potential in Central Asia, bypassing neighbouring Pakistan.

According to an official statement, the contract was



signed by India Ports Global Ltd (IPGL) and Iran's Port & Maritime Organisation (PMO), in the presence of Shipping and ays Minister Ports, Waterways M Sarbananda Sonowal.

"The long-term bilateral

Operation was signed between Indian Ports Global Limited (IPGL) of India and the Port & Maritime Organisation (PMO) of Iran, enabling operation of Shahid-Beheshti in Chabahar Port Development Project for a period of 10 years," the state-

#### Port will connect India to Central Asia: Jaishankar

PNS MUMBAI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Monday said Chabahar Port will definitely see more investments and connectivity linkages coming out of it after India and Iran signed a longterm contract for the operation of its Shahid Beheshti Port terminal.

He also said the Port will help con-nect India and Central Asia better. "Right now the port has not grown. If you don't have a long-term agreement it is difficult to invest in a port. So the very clear expectation is that part of the Chabahar that we are involved in will definitely see

more investments, it will see more connectivity linkages coming out of that port," Jaishankar said.

"We believe today that connectivity is a big issue in that part. Chabahar will connect us with Central Asia," he added.

The contract was signed in Tehran by India Ports Global Ltd and the Ports and Maritime Organisation of Iran in the presence of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, according to a

series of posts on X by the Indian Embassy in Iran. This is the first time India will take over the management of an overseas port.

#### **GST REGISTRATION**

## Five states show interest in Aadhaar-based authentication

PNS NEW DELHI

states, including Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Telangana, have shown interest in rolling out Aadhaar-based authentication for GST registration, an official said on Monday.

The biometric-based authentication was discussed at the third National Co-ordination Meeting of senior Central and State GST officers earlier this month. Currently, two states, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh, and the Territory Union Puducherry have launched the Aadhaar authentication

of taxpayers on a pilot basis. "Around five states, including Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and

THENTICATION FOR 65T EGESTRATION

Telangana, have shown interest in implementing Aadhaar-based authentication for GST

registration," an official said. The official further said that these states wanted to assess the cost involved, the infrastructure and manpower requirement for implementing the requirement of biometric authentication for registration.

The data has been provided to them and based on the assessment, these states will have to

put the proposal up before the state Cabinets for approval.

Goods and Services Tax (GST) authorities have so far been using OTP-based Aadhaar authentication to establish the identity of the applicants, seeking registration.

However, with instances coming to light wherein other people's identity was misused to create bogus firms for claiming input tax credit (ITC), the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) had decided to move towards biometric authentication under which in certain suspicious cases, the person seeking registration will be asked to go to an Aadhaar centre to have his

## India extend US\$ 50 million budgetary support to Maldives as goodwill gesture

In a goodwill gesture, India has decided to extend vital budgetary support to the Maldives with the rollover of a US\$ 50 million Treasury Bill for another year at the Maldivian government's special request, it was announced on Monday.

The State Bank of India has subscribed for one more year to the US\$ 50 million Government Treasury Bill, issued by the Ministry of maturity of the previous subthe High Commission of India said in a brief statement on Monday.

The Indian government took this decision despite the



bulence since Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu, a office six months back.

These Government Treasury Bills are subscribed by SBI under government-to-government, a unique arrangement at zero cost (interest-free) to the

bilateral ties experiencing tur- Government of Maldives. The continuation of sub-

scription has been made at the Government of Maldives to secure budgetary support from the Government of India, the statement said.

Under the terms of special government-to-government

subscribing to these government treasury bills at zero cost to the Maldives government. This means the Maldives incurs no interest expense on the borrowed amount, the Edition.mv news portal reported.

The first treasury bill, valued at US\$ 50 million, matured in January 2024, which the Maldives had repaid. The second treasury bill, also valued at US\$ 50 million, is set to mature in May 2024. In response to a special request Maldives, SBI has opted to extend its subscription for another year.

The third treasury bill is due to mature in September, the report said.

#### Ola CEO shuns Microsoft, says India needs its own tech platforms

PNS NEW DELHI

Rebuking Microsoft and its subsidiary LinkedIn, Ola CEO Bhavish Aggarwal in a post said India needs to establish its own tech platforms to shun the chances of being "culturally subsumed" and "governed" by western big tech monopolies.

Boycotting Microsoft, Aggarwal said Ola -- an exist-ing customer of Microsoft Azure -- will no longer avail of its services, and will shift its entire workload to its home-Krutrim cloud

The backlash comes after LinkedIn removed the CEO's post that called out LinkedIn's AI for "imposing a political ideology on Indian users".



He had shared a screenshot from a generative AI response that used "they/their" pronouns to describe Aggarwal.

Berating the "pronoun illness", he had said he hopes the practise doesn't reach India.
"...the pronouns issue I wrote

about is a woke political ideology of entitlement which doesn't belong in India. I wouldn't have waded into this debate but clearly LinkedIn has

nave pronouns in our life, and that we can't criticise it. They will bully us into agreeing with them or cancel us out," he

Aggarwal called out to the Indian developer community to build a DPI (digital public infrastructure) social media framework. Lauding Indian DPIs like UPI, ONDC, and Aadhaar, he said the only community guidelines should be the Indian law.

"No corporate person should able to decide banned. Data should be owned by the creators instead of being owned by the corporates who make money using our data and then lecture us on 'community guidelines'," he said.

#### Retail inflation eases to 4.83%

PNS NEW DELHI

biometrics verified.

Retail inflation eased to 4.83 per cent in April as prices of some kitchen items declined, according to gov-ernment data released on Monday.

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) based retail inflation was 4.85 per cent in March. It was 4.7 per cent in April

Inflation in the food basket was at 8.70 per cent in April, marginally up from 8.52 per cent in March, according to the data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO).

government has tasked the Reserve Bank to ensure inflation remains at 4 per cent, with a margin of 2 per cent on either side.

## Stock markets rebound on last-hour buying

PNS MUMBAI

Benchmark Sensex and Nifty staged a dramatic rebound on Monday to settle higher following buying in HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank and Tata Consultancy Services.

Helped by buying at the fag-end, the 30-share BSE Sensex closed higher by 111.66 points or 0.15 per cent at 72,776.13. The index opened lower and plummetted further 798.46 points or 1.09 per cent to hit a low of 71,866.01 in day trade.

The NSE Nifty rose by 48.85 points or 0.22 per cent to 22,104.05. The 50-issue

rebounded around 310 points from the day's low of 21,821.05 and hit a high of 22,131.65. From the Sensex basket,

Asian Paints, Sun Pharma, HDFC Bank, Tata Consultancy Services, Axis Bank, Tata Steel, JSW Steel, Larsen & Toubro, ICICI Bank and Power Grid were the major gainers. Tata Motors dropped over 8 per cent despite reporting over three-fold jump in consolidated net profit at Rs 17,528.59 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 31, 2024.

NTPC, Bharti Airtel, Titan, State Bank of India and Nestle were the other major laggards.

## Govt plans to make anti-fake review rules mandatory for e-commerce firms

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government is considering to make it mandatory for ecommerce companies to comply with quality norms for consumer reviews after a voluntary push failed to effectively curb fake reviews, a top official said on Monday.

The government issued the new quality norms for e-tailers a year ago, prohibiting them from publishing paid reviews and demanding disclosure of such promotional content.

But fake reviews of products and services on e-commerce platforms are still slipping through, said Nidhi Khare,



"It's been more than one year that the voluntary standard on 'online reviews' was notified. Some entities claim that they are complying with it. However, fake reviews are still getting published," Khare said.

Secretary at the Consumer Affairs Ministry.

"It's been more than one year that the voluntary standard on 'online reviews' was notified. Some entities claim that they are complying with it. However, fake reviews are still getting published," Khare

'To safeguard the consumer interest, now we want to make these standards mandatory," she said, adding that the ministry has scheduled a meeting with e-commerce firms and consumer organisations on May 15 to discuss the proposed

PNS MUMBAI

Demand for skilled nurses is

projected to grow by 17-18 per

cent by 2027 in the country but

a large number of trained ones are seeking opportunities abroad, drawn by enhanced

remuneration packages and facilitative family visa pro-

grammes, digital talent solutions provider NLB Services

The ministry's Bureau of

Indian Standards (BIS) that formulated and issued the new standard for "Online Consumer Reviews" in November 2022, barred publishing of reviews "purchased and/or written by individuals employed for that purpose by the supplier or third party concerned".

With no chance to physically inspect products, consumers heavily rely on online reviews while making purchases. Misleading reviews and ratings can lead them to purchase goods or services based on incorrect information.

#### Coromandel to acquire additional 7% stake in Dhaksha

PNS NEW DELHI

Coromandel International Ltd on Monday announced the acquisition of an additional 7 per cent stake in Chennai-based drone manufacturing firm Dhaksha Unmanned Systems with an investment of Rs 150 crore. The proceeds from this fundraise will help Dhaksha in strengthening its research and development efforts, cater to servicing large orders and meeting its working capital needs, the

company said in a statement. With this, the company's overall stake in Dhaksha will increase to 58 per cent. The stake will be acquired through the subsidiary firm Coromanel

Technology Ltd, it added. "This investment in Dhaksha aligns with Coromandel's vision of diversifying in technology spaces and promoting technology adoption across various spheres, Coromandel International Ltd Executive Chairman Arun Alagappan said.

"Coromandel will invest Rs 150 crore through fresh issue of shares to increase its overall shareholding in Dhaksha to 58 per cent," the company said. Alagappan said Coromandel has been associated with Dhaksha right from its early startup stage and has been supporting the company on talent acquisition, R&D, and production scale-up.

## 51.40 cr person-years employment generated during 2014-24: SKOCH

PNS NEW DELHI

regime.

A SKOCH report on Monday claimed that 51.40 crore person years of employment was generated between 2014 and 2024 during the Modi government

A man-year or person-year is a unit of measurement for the amount of work done by an individual throughout the entire year expressed in hours.

The report titled, Employment Generative Impact of ModiNomics: The Paradigm Shifts, is based on 80



case studies covering borrowers who took multiple loans and data of various government schemes..

"Over a period between 2014-24, a total of 51.40 crore employment has been generated. Out of which 19.79 crore employment has been generated by governance-led interventions. The rest, 31.61 crore, has been contributed by credit-led interventions," a rélease said.

SKOCH Group is India's think tank dealing with socio-economic issues, focusing on inclusive growth since 1997.. The current study also finds that micro-loans are being used to generate employment that is steady and stable, it stated.

"We have documented 80 case studies from our field visits covering borrowers who

have taken multiple loans and the average direct employment per loan amount stands at 6.6 jobs," said author of the report Sameer Kochhar, Chairman, SKOCH Group.

These were the findings of a SKOCH study of Bandhan Bank's ecosystem visiting hundreds of small loan beneficiaries across four states, the release stated.. According to the release this is a part of SKOCH's ongoing

study on employment genera-

tion titled A Hundred Voices,

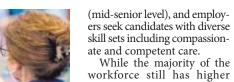
A Billion Dreams

said in a report. The report said that in India, the demand for skilled nursing talent is on a steadfast trajectory, projected to increase by 17-18 per cent by 2027, and the

# opportunities despite domestic demand'

demand for nursing roles spans across regions including Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh.

The nursing profile currently commands annual earnings ranging between Rs 2,50,000 (entry-level) to Rs 7,00,000



'Skilled Indian nurses seek overseas

female representation, there is a noticeable increase in male nurses as well, it added. However, the ecosystem also faces concerns with regard to

as there are 1.7 nurses per 1,000 people in the country instead of 3, the report noted. Another interesting trend

influencing the talent supply

gap is the increased demand

the availability of skilled talent,

globally has witnessed a notable surge over the past 3 years, recording a 14-15 per cent y-o-y increase in employment opportunities primarily influenced by the growth in the healthcare industry and early career retirement patterns in the nursing ecosystem, the report noted

for Indian nursing talent

The demand for Indian

nurses abroad is growing

steadily, and is projected to

increase by almost 100 per cent

The demand for nurses

abroad, said the report.

in 6-7 years, it added.

## what's brewing?

Vijayawada | Tuesday May 14, 2024



Esha & beau Manuel open for IVF, surrogacy & adoption

**Zayn Malik is** 'completely
supportive' of Gigi
Hadid's present
relationship: Source

Zayn Malik and Gigi Hadid are on good terms, as the latter is ting Bradley Cooper. Malik, 31, does, in fact, support the couple's relationship. "He's completely supportive," a source says emphasising that the couple has come a long way since their 2021

dating Cooper, 49. The couple, who were first linked in October of last year, are both single parents, with Hadid having daughter Khai, three, and Malik and Cooper sharing daughter Lea De Seine with ex-girlfriend Irina Shayk. As their relationship grows stronger, the runway model is apparently "thrilled with how things are going'

However, Hadid is equally concerned with ensuring that her daughter's father, Malik, is on the same page.

'They went through a rough patch but have both matured and are focusing on their 3-year-old daughter [Khai]," a second source tells

According to the report, Malik was displeased with Hadid's relationship

Hadid and Malik met in 2015 and dated on and off for six years before splitting in 2021. Following the announcement of their breakup, the former One Direction member was charged with four counts of harassment stemming from an alleged confrontation with Hadid's mother, Yolanda. Back then, the

but seemed to have changed his mind. Pillowtalk singer pleaded no contest and rejected all of the counts



#### Olivia had to go through full hysterectomy to avoid cancer recurrence

livia Munn, who starred in *X-Men: Days of the Future Past*, said in a recent interview that she had a full hysterectomy in April due to her ongoing battle with breast cancer. Olivia indicated that removing her uterus, fallopian tubes, and ovaries was the best deliving the results in the state of the said cancer recurrence by halting the synthesis of estrogen in her body. She said, "It was a big decision to make, but it was the best deci-

She said, It was a big decision to make, but it was the best decision for me because I needed to be present for my family."

The actor continued, "I had friends try to cheer me up by saying, 'Malcolm's not going to remember this. Don't worry.' But I just kept thinking to myself, 'I'm going to remember this; I missed all these things.' It's his childhood, but it's my motherhood, and I don't want to miss any of these parts if I don't have to."

It's Munn's fifth surgery in her battle with cancer. Previously, she underwent a full double mastectomy, lymph node dissection, reconstructive surgery, and a nipple delay. Munn also revealed that she had been taking Lupron to suppress estrogen before her hysterectomy, but the medication's adverse effects had left her bedridden owing to acute exhaustion.

owing to acute exhaustion.

Munn revealed that she froze her eggs for the third time after being diagnosed, expressing her and her partner John Mulaney's wish to grow their family. Munn officially publicised her breast cancer diagnosis in March, after which she had a double mastectomy. Her breast carcinoma risk assessment score was allegedly 37%, and an MRI revealed luminal B carcinoma in both of her breasts.



JOINS THE REAL HOUSEWIVES OF BEVERLY HILLS CAST

for her friend Amanda de Cadenet, who is said to be joining Season 14 of The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills. Filming for this season began last weekend, and Kyle Richards—the final member of the original cast—was spotted in front of the Bravo cameras at Sutton Stracke's Surrealism Ball.

Halloween actor Kyle Richards' pal, Jamie Lee Curtis, who has appeared multiple times on the popular *Bravo* series, spilled some info about Amanda de Cadenet, who is purportedly joining the show as

"Excited my friend [Amanda de Cadenet] is a new FRIEND of [Kyle Richards] and the gang on [RHOBH]," Curtis wrote on Instagram. "Amanda will bring her cool rebel/rock/wife, feminism and advocacy for women to that group. Can't wait to

Curtis also hinted that she would visit in the upcoming season to see how her friends Cadenet and Richards are doing. US Weekly revealed that Kathy Hilton, Garcelle Beauvais, Erika Jayne, and presumed newbie Bozoma Saint John were among the women filming RHOBH at Sutton's house this weekend, though Bravo has not yet confirmed the group for the upcoming season.

#### **ARCHIE**







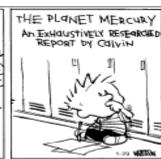
#### **CALVIN AND HOBBES**





SPEED BUMP





#### GARFIELD





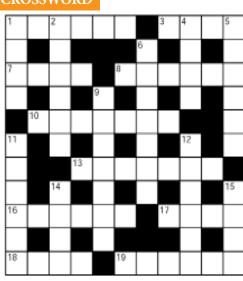


## THAT C-PAP MACHINE WORKS GREAT! YOU DIDN'T SNORE ALMOST THE WHOLE

REALITY CHECK

## I'M MAKING SOME POOR GUY WATCH THE NEWS 2417.

#### **CROSSWORD**



#### NANCY







#### **SUDOKU**

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DIFFICULTY RATING: \*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

#### Rules

- Each row and column can contain each number (1 to 9)
- exactly once. • The sum of all numbers in any row or column must equal 45.

#### DOWN Not sick. 2 Just about

4 Overdue

5 A talking pet bird

ACROSS

1 A season

7 Jump over

10 Applauded

13 Bumped

16 Sleepy

3 Strike with an open hand.

8 Having a sharp sour taste

- 17 A biting, jumping insect
- 18 Require 19 Something built over a river



6 A permit to drive

15 A strong box for

12 Shouted

14 Gown

9 The language of Spain

11 Concealed from view

storing valuables

#### **GINGER MEGGS**







# The pioneer and a language of the pi

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Tuesday May 14, 2024

## Saiyami could feel her character 'racked with pain' in 8 A.M. Metro

SHIKHA DUGGAL

ecent box-office success Ghoomar's renowned fame, Saiyami Kher, returns once again with 8 A.M. Metro-the adaptation Andamaina Jeevitam

Actress Saiyami

Kher, currently

basking on the

love she's been

receiving for her

streamed on Zee

with *The Pioneer* 

speaking of her

"suffering" in the

shooting in real

locations, and

film, preps for

5, gets candid

exclusively

character

the same,

more.

film *8 A. M.* 

*Metro*, being

⊾into a Hindi film that displays her dedication to pushing boundaries and delivering essential storylines to a larger audience. The film may have been released in 2023. but now is the moment for it to find its rightful place on a national stage, generating greater appreciation. So, in order to learn more about the popularity of this simple yet uplifting story, we had a call with the lead actress, and here's how it

Without hesitation, she dives right into her characterisation in the film, saying, "As everyone already knows, my character is dealing with mental health concerns. So, as soon as I noticed the phrase 'mental health' in my readings, I was determined to bring this essential topic back to the forefront. Not that others haven't talked about it; they have, but our plot was slightly slanted toward lyrical lines. I wouldn't call it a complex character, but my character is "suffering" in the movie. The gravity of the character gradually became apparent to me, and I am not lying when I say that I could

Okay, let's not call it complex, as Saiyami stated! But may sensitive be the correct word? Taking note of

this, we were curious about the preps that went into portraying this "sensitive" role on-screen. She added, "I had never had a panic attack, but I know some of my close friends and family members who had. Unfortunately, I have witnessed it. I got into the persona after meeting a few psychiatrists

and therapists! It was critical for me to comprehend what occurs during a panic attack, even in a bodily sense. Even my co-star told me later on in the filming, 'Saiyami, do you know? When exposed to panic attack, some people appear to experience a heart attack. That startled me!" So such professional data was useful to her, includ-

ing, "The videos that I watched online to see what kinds of reactions they get. And they differed greatly! So I had to show on screen that I'm sweating and unable to breathe. The psychologist emphasised the significance of these minor details.

The well-known actress from Mirzya told us how she brought out the nuances of the unlikely friendship on-screen, stating, "This script also reminded me of one of my most favourite films that I tend to watch on a loop. This movie isn't only about a romantic angle but also about the serendipity of the friendship that's coming alive. And this is a real possibility; it might happen in our lives at any time! In my personal life, I've had several similar experiences. That stranger made me a better person, but one must be open to that type of contact! Another example is filming with your co-stars; they are usually strangers to you if you are matched for the first time on screen, yet they bring out the chemistry in vou." This dynamic has been very prevalent in the film industry for her. Fortunately, Gulshan is not one of them (she giggles). "We've worked together before. And I couldn't wait to continue working with him from where we left off! I was unprepared for our last collaboration; therefore,

this was my turn to shine alongside Gulshan in this film. And I must say, it worked out really well." Hammering deeper into the ongoing discussions on the film, she explains, "The best and worst reactions come to us through social media these days, so I've seen times when a few users were

way too brutal to me online. But by God's grace, I've had incredible reactions to my back-to-back releases. I am receiving DMs in which a few people are telling me about their real-life experiences. I believe I restarted the conversation about it! I recognise that my film is on a tiny scale, but if it reaches a huge number of people, I consider it successful." Another appealing aspect of this film is its use of poetry and literature, which piques our interest in the actress' personal relationship to it and how poetry enhances the plot. Oh, she had a personal story to share with us! "I'm a huge fan of poetry, owing to Gulzar Sahab, who wrote my debut movie. Since I met him, he has made me fall in love with poetry. Javed Akhtar Sahab could be another powerful influence in inspiring me to fall in love with poetry. I have looked up to him since I was a child! So I'm used to writing poetry at home for personal gratification, but this film provided me the opportunity to bring it into the spotlight. It's literally the central strand of our film! I could draw inspiration from Farhan Akhtar's portrayal in ZNMD, which made both my character and the film more artistic than commercial. What helped the movie even more was the fact that the makers did not use poetry for superfluous ends.' And how could we miss the lead actors filming a few important sequences in the metro, all through the lens of commuting while in it? She revealed interesting facts about it, saying, "It was a low-budget film, so all of the locations were

real, including the scenes shot in the metro. It's Anurag Kashyap's way of shooting! This movie contained a lot of exterior scenes, which boosted my excitement. And my biggest takeaway from this film is the renewed public discourse about the importance of consulting psychologists for mental wellness. Because I've been advised by a few industry professionals not to choose roles that appear older or less glamorous—but to me, they're just noise because I do what my heart finds rewarding."





## **CELEBRATING**

SUBODHINI PUROHIT

or the second consecutive year, Walkers & Co. made its triumphant return to the ■ Festival De Cannes, showcasing Indian filmmakers through collaborative efforts. In regards to this, an exclusive virtual round table discussion was organised featuring film critic Anupama Chopra, alongside emerging film-makers Ambiecka Pandit and Akshay Parvatkar,

mentored by Guneet Monga.

To begin with, Ruchira Jaitley, Diageo's CMO shared, "The essence is to foster progress through collective storytelling. In today's rapidly changing society, the celebration of individuals making a positive impact is paramount, and the film serves as a medium for proactive narratives. Cannes is the epitome of this creativity, offering a platform for learning and inspiration. *The Walkers Project* aims to support young filmmakers, expanding the Indian presence at Cannes and guiding emerging talents to experience the magic of the festival."

Ambiecka reflects on the incredible opportunity presented by the project, emphasising the challenging selection process and the chance to articulate the significance of cinema. For her and Akshay, being nominated is not just an honour but also a transformative journey, opening minds to new possibilities in filmmaking. Akshay said, "I am honoured to be part of the fellowship, and it gave me confidence in whatever I have made; short films and conversations

with film critics have already been fruitful."

The selection process for the project spanned four months, and explaining the same, Anupama explained, "It involved three curators who also doubled as film critics and companions. Sonia, from the Mumbai Film Festival, was among them. They deliberated and eventually presented six names for consideration in The Walkers Project. Deepti DCunha, the director of the Mumbai Film Festival, was impressed by the incredible short films, which sparked lengthy discussions. Eventually, it was agreed that two individuals stood out as the best fit for one of the project."

The ethos is centered around expanding perspectives, amplifying voices, and fostering inclusion, progression, and community change. These guiding principles inspire young filmmakers to create impactful stories that resonate deeply with audiences. Ambiecka expresses her anticipation of further developing her voice and honour it through her work.

Akshay shared his excitement upon learning of his selection, feeling an immediate connection with the ethos, which aligns closely with his own beliefs. He spoke of his commitment to inclusion in his films and recognised the platform as a significant opportunity to authentically express his voice while making meaningful contributions to the film industry!

Anupama put a spotlight on the significance of seizing every opportunity, highlighting mentors like Guneet's invaluable support for young filmmakers. Reflecting on her experiences at Cannes,

she shares practical advice, underscoring the importance of comfortable shoes amidst the bustling environment. Anupama urges, "Filmmakers should prioritise comfort over fashion, considering the extensive walking and standing involved." With thousands of attendees immersed in cinema over ten days, she describes Cannes as both hectic and enchanting, emphasising the need for relentless energy, hydration, and seizing every chance to eat.

"These may seem mundane tips, but they're indispensable for navigating the festival's whirlwind atmosphere." She also encouraged filmmakers to be proactive in networking, shedding any shyness

to make meaningful connections! After absorbing Anupama's experiences, Ambiecka too acknowledged the demanding nature of festivals, recognising the mix of networking, standing, and walking involved. She appreciated the insights gained from Anupama, providing valuable expectations for the festival. Ambiecka found the workshops engaging, particularly in understanding the film ecosystem. Through discussions with curators, the young filmmakers learned invaluable tips on navigating the festival terrain, gaining new perspectives, and delving into topics like co-production. A session with Guneet addressed lingering doubts, offering clarity and guidance. Initial conversations about festival essentials such as food and attire proved instrumental, setting a practical tone for their festival

## Managing lower urinary tract symptoms (LUTS) in men

mpact the lower urinary tract's ability to man—Examples include finasteride and age and produce high-quality micturition. Both men and women can be affected by LUTS, albeit males are more likely to present with them and their frequency increases with age. According to estimates, nearly 50% of males over 50 experience LUTS.

Lower urinary tract symptoms (LUTS) in men can be classified into two broad categories:

Storage symptoms: These include urgency, frequency, nocturia, and urgency incontinence. They indicate problems with storing urine in the bladder.

Voiding symptoms: These encompass hesitancy, weak stream, straining, and incomplete emptying. They suggest difficulties in evacuating urine from the bladder.

The management of lower urinary tract symptoms (LUTS) in men typically involves addressing both storage and voiding symptoms, as well as identifying and treating the underlying cause. Here's a general overview of management strategies:

**1. Lifestyle modifications:** Encouraging lifestyle changes such as reducing fluid intake before bedtime, avoiding caffeine and alcohol, and maintaining a healthy weight can help improve symptoms.

2. Behavioural therapies: Techniques such as bladder training, pelvic floor exercises (Kegel exercises), and timed voiding can help manage symptoms, particularly in cases of overactive bladder or urge incontinence.

- 3. Medications:
- Alpha-blockers: These relax the muscles in the prostate and bladder neck, improving urine flow and reducing symptoms of bladder outlet obstruction. Examples include tamsulosin, alfuzosin, and
- 5-alpha reductase inhibitors: These medications

The term "lower urinary tract symptoms" can reduce the size of the prostate gland, particularly in cases of benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH).

- Antimuscarinics: Used primarily for overactive bladder symptoms to reduce urgency and frequency. Examples include oxybutynin, tolterodine, and solifenacin.
- the bladder muscle, increasing bladder capacity and reducing symptoms of overactive bladder.

• Beta-3 agonists: Drugs like mirabegron can relax

- Phosphodiesterase-5 inhibitors: Sometimes used to improve symptoms of BPH and erectile dvsfunction, such as tadalafil.
- Antibiotics: If symptoms are due to a urinary tract infection or prostatitis.
- 4. Minimally invasive therapies: For men who don't respond well to medications, minimally invasive procedures such as transurethral resection of the prostate (TURP), laser prostate surgery (such as HoLEP) or prostatic urethral lift (UroLift) may be considered.
- **5. Combination therapy:** Sometimes, a combination of medications or therapies may be more effective, especially in cases where symptoms are mul-
- **6. Follow-up and monitoring:** Regular follow-up with the urologist is essential to monitor symptoms, adjust medications if necessary, and address any complications or changes in condition.

Ultimately, the choice of treatment depends on the individual patient's symptoms, underlying cause, overall health, and preferences, and should be decided in consultation with a healthcare provider. Additionally, considering age-related factors and potential comorbidities is important in tailoring the management approach.

(The author, Dr. Vikas Jain, is the HOD and Consultant - Urology, at Manipal Hospital.)



## Focus on KL Rahul as LSG face DC in playoff battle

Pocus will be on skipper KL Rahul as a struggling Lucknow Super Giants look to keep their slim IPL playoff chances alive when they face an equally desperate Delhi Capitals in a must-win game here on Tuesday.

Delhi Capitals in a must-win game here on Tuesday.

There has been a lot of speculations about Rahul's future as LSG skipper after his "public reprimand" by team owner Sanjiv Goenka following their 10-wicket hammering by Sunrisers Hyderabad last Wednesday.

Speculations are rife that Rahul

Speculations are rife that Rahul may step down as captain or perhaps he will do his duties for the remaining two games before leaving LSG. In either case, the India batter would look to answer with his bat and end things on a high.

Rahul hasn't been in the best of form and it's not only cost him a place in India's T20 squad but also left LSG at the seventh spot with 12 points with RCB

sixth respectively.

Five days is a lot of time to introspect and Rahul and Co.

Will look to come out all guns blazing when they face DC, who are also on 12 points and are coming into the match after a loss against RCB on Sunday night. Besides Rahul, Quinton De Kock's poor form this season has left LSG struggling in the powerplay, putting pressure on the likes of Marcus Stoinis and Nicholas Pooran, who haven't got the freedom to unleash their big shots.

Although Pooran and Ayush Badoni managed to rescue the team in the last match, the bowlers failed miserably against the formidable SRH pair of Travis Head and Abhishek Sharma, who racked up 167 in 9.4 overs, a T20I

record by any team.
The loss of tearaway pacer
Mayank Yadav to injury has
left a big hole which Yash Thakur and Naveen-ul-Haq haven't been able to fill. Also



Mohsin Khan picked up an injury and didn't play last

The spin duo of Krunal Pandya and Ravi Bishnoi too have been to do a lot of soul

searching after being punished by SRH. Delhi Capitals, on the other hand, will hope the return of skipper Rishabh Pant after a one-match suspension due to slow overrate against

Rajasthan Royals will help them to end things on a high. Delhi sans Pant paid the price for their fielding lapses as those drop catches and misfields came back to haunt them

While the bowlers let RCB off the hook after a good start, the batting once again came unstuck as they lost four wickets inside 4 overs to be bowled out for their lowest innings score this IPL.

But this is the same team which scored four 200 plus totals this season and they will

totals this season and they will have to find their mark in their last game to salvage any slim hopes of a top four. Jack Fraser-McGurk, with 330 runs from seven matches at an impressive strike-rate of 237.41, has been their most impactful batter. While Abhishek Porel (269, 156.39), Pant (413, 156.43) and Tristan Stubbs (321, 185.54) too have Stubbs (321, 185.54) too have been among runs this season. In the bowling department, the spin duo of Kuldeep Yadav (15) and Axar Patel (10) have shared 25 wickets, while pacers Khaleel Ahmed (16 wickets) and Mukesh Kumar (16) too them



#### Going forward, players will be selected in playing XI on basis of impact and not averages: Miller

For someone who has the ability to deliver maximum impact, South African batter David Miller reckons averages in T20 cricket will gradually lose relevance and strike rate will be the only barometer of success. Over the past couple of years, Miller has performed the finisher's role with distinction both for Gujarat Titans and his national team. With seven scores in excess of 250 plus this IPL season, the batters have taken the power game to the next level, fuelling

game to the next level, fuelling the strike rate debate. "We've seen some high scores this year. And it's been incredible batting by a few teams and few individual players in this IPL. And look, I always see everyone judges a batter on the average," Miller told PTI Videos.

"But in T20 cricket, it can be difficult to judge someone purely on that. The top three batters, definitely you can because of the number of overs they get to bat. When it comes to the middle order, it has always been the strike rates and what kind of impact the batter has had in the game. "I suppose as we move forward, it becomes more and more about impact. How impactful are you in the game? Depending on the situation. If we're needing 15 an over, can you do it? And that's, I think, what guys are going to have to select teams on their match-winning ability," said the 34-year-old. Talking about the T20 World Cup next month, Miller is looking forward to intense battles with likes of Jasprit Bumrah.

batter facing the bowlers, Bumrah is bowling well at the moment. And he has been a world-class bowler for many years. He's a threat to me, as well as every other batter in the World Cup," said the southpaw. He also showered praise on fellow Titans' batter Sai Sudharsan, who is in the middle of his most productive season in the IPL.

"He's an incredibly talented player. Still got a long career ahead of him. I've enjoyed watching him play. I love the way that he preps. And just the build-up to games and how he goes about it. He's a very level-headed young boy that's got a lot of talent," said Miller. The World Cup in the Americas will provide Miller and South African exportantity.

and South African opportunity to get their hands on an elusive global trophy. The hard-hitting batter is excited about the challenge.

"This team that we have at the moment has played a lot of cricket together the last couple of years and has a lot of confidence and a lot of success. "We've got a lot of experience, guys that have been under pressure before and come through successfully. So, putting all the individuals together in a T20 World Cup, I have no doubt that we most certainly going to give it our best shot. We have the players to do it, the skill to do it."

On his own performances in ICC events, Miller added: "I love World Cups, I must be honest. I feel like I've done well at World Cups, personally. And I just want to continue the momentum.

"For you to say, finally, Killer Miller coming to life, I think "There are so many good I've done pretty well at Indian players. But me being a previous World Cups."

#### RCB have demonstrated ability to deliver when it counts: Moody

PTI NEW DELHI

 $\begin{array}{ccc} Royal & Challengers \\ Bengaluru have shown the \\ ability to perform when it \\ matters most, said former \end{array}$ Challengers Australian all-rounder Tom Moody after their fifth straight win in the IPL.

Languishing at the bottom of the points table 10 days ago, Virat Kohli and Co have found their mojo back. Their winning streak has given them a fighting chance to make the knockout stage.

knockout stage.
"Once again, RCB has demonstrated their ability to deliver when it counts, setting the stage for what promises to be a thrilling encounter between the two teams," Moody said on Star Sports. They will take on MS Dhoni's

Chennai Super Kings, who are also in contention for a playoff berth, in their final league game at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium on Saturday.
"It's iconic for the entire IPL,

truly. You've got two colossal names in cricket here in India and in world cricket-Dhoni



and Kohli. "They're both dominant figures, leaving a huge legacy wherever they've been. And the interesting thing is anything can still happen on that table."

Barring Kolkata Kinght Riders, who have already qualified, as many as seven teams are still in contention for a playoffs berth.

"After the weekend, I was assuming that a couple of results will sort of fall the way." they should fall and then we'll have a clear idea who's going to end up in that top four.

"Yet, it's still anyone's game. Any team could clinch a spot

Moody said. After a sedate start to the season, RCB batter Rajat

Patidar has found his groove, scoring five fifties in the last seven innings at a quick pace. "Patidar, in particular, has been a revelation in the past five or six games, notching up several quick-fire half-centuries.

"His aggressive approach has consistently put pressure on the opposition's bowling attack, making it incredibly making challenging for them to get back into the contest," Moody

#### PBKS' Livingstone returns to England to address knee niggle ahead of T20 WC

 $\begin{array}{ccc} P_{\text{Liam}}^{\text{unjab}} & \text{Kings' all-rounder} \\ \text{Liam} & \text{Livingstone} & \text{on} \\ \text{Monday returned to England} \end{array}$ from the ongoing IPL to undergo a knee recuperation ahead of the next month's T20 World Cup.

The Kings are already eliminated from this IPL after managing just four wins from 12 matches and they are currently at the bottom of the table with eight points.

"IPL done for another year, had to get my knee sorted for the upcoming World Cup," Livingstone wrote on his Instagram wall.

"Thanks once again to the Punjab Kings fans for all their love and support. Disappointing season as a team and personally, but as always, I loved every minute of playing in the IPL," he added. Hence I ivingstone will not be Hence, Livingstone will not be available for PBKS' last two matches of the tournament against Rajasthan Royals (Mav 15) and Sunrisers Hyderabad



The injury is not of serious nature but the England management, ESPNCricinfo, decided to give him more time to get it treated prior to their home T20I series against Pakistan, beginning on May 22.

After that series, the defending champions will travel to the West Indies for their T20 World Cup engagements, starting on June 4 against Scotland in Bridgetown, Barbados

Livingstone had a lean IPL this season, scoring 111 runs from seven matches and took just three wickets.

Meanwhile, other England players in the IPL who are part of their World Cup squad — Moeen Ali (CSK), Sam Curran, Jonny Bairstow (PBKS), Jos Buttler (RR), Will Jacks, Reece Topley (RCB) and Phil Salt (KKR) - will be homebound the coming weekend

## We have switched on the attacking mode: RCB pacer Dayal

Pace bowler Yash Dayal attributed the renaissance of Royal Challengers Bengaluru in the second half of the IPL to them "switching on the attacking After six consecutive defeats, Royal

Challengers won five matches on the bounce to remain in contention for a playoff berth.

In the last game, RCB defeated Delhi Capitals by 47 runs here on Sunday to leap to fifth spot on the table with 12 points from 13 matches.
"Our performances have markedly

improved in the last few matches. I think we have switched on that attacking mode in the last few matches. It has been a big positive for us," said Dayal, who took three for 20 against DC, during the post-

The left-arm quick said even while RCB were going through a losing streak, the dressing room remained a thickly-knit

like it happened with us, morale will come down a bit. But we took it in our stride and bounced back well.

"When you lose matches continuously,

"But even when we were losing, fingers were not pointed at anyone. We have remained positive throughout the season," he added.

place in the first half of the season. Daval credited team bowling coach

The resurgence of RCB is directly linked with the improved performance of their bowling unit, which was all over the Adam Griffith for that turnaround. "The credit goes to our bowling coach. He engages us in specific drills,



visualising particular opposition batsmen and we discuss this a lot. When I go out to bowl, I just think about how to get the batter out or save some runs. All of us think the same way," he added.

"GAVE TOO MANY RUNS": James Hopes, the DC bowling coach, said dropped catches allowed RCB to add a few more runs and reach an over-par total.

Rajat Patidar, who made a quick fifty, and Will Jacks, who scored a fluent 41, were dropped multiple times on Sunday. "They got one too many and we dropped four catches and had we taken them we

could have probably restricted them to "But that's fine and if you are not going to put it together with the bat you are not tournament," said Hopes. The Delhi side now has 12 points from

13 matches and it now needs a massive win over Lucknow Super Giants on Tuesday to keep their playoff hopes alive. The former Australian all-rounder was confident of achieving it in their home ground.

We have to win big now. But fortunately, we are going back to Delhi where big scores have been the norm for the season. "So, we are going to ask them to put a big score on the board and keep them a fair way below us to have any chance to advance in this tournament," he said. However, Hopes rued the missed opportunity against RCB.

But today was our chance to really get into the mix for playing finals, and now we've left it up to fight, which you don't really want to do in this tournament."

#### **OTHER SPORTS**

## Satwik, Chirag look to regain competitive edge as Thailand Open begins

**PTI** ■ BANGKOK

Star shuttlers Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty will look to regain their competitive edge as they spearhead the Indian challenge at the Thailand Open Super 500 tournament, beginning here on Tuesday.

The top seeded Indian pair, who are one of the favourites to win a gold at the Paris Olympics, found it a tad difficult to negotiate the variety of serves dished out by the Indonesians and Chinese at

the Thomas Cup.
Both shuttlers will look to address the slight drop in their level this week when they begin their campaign against Malaysia's Nur Mohd Azriyn Ayub

Azriyn and Tan Wee Kiong.
With the Olympic-bound shuttlers looking to fine-tune their skills ahead of the Paris Games, the BWF world tour events will offer the perfect platform for them to test those new strokes or tweaks that they make to their games.

India's top player in singles, HS Prannoy, a world championships and



Asian Games bronze medallist, too will have to find his best footing after being troubled by health issues this season. His win over Indonesia's Anthony Ginting was a confidence booster but the loss against China's Shi Yuqi will

trouble him as he needs to close out such narrow games to get into the best mental shape ahead of the Olympics. Kiran George and Sathish Kumar Karunakaran are also in fray, while Lakshya Sen and PV Sindhu had pulled out before the draw was announced last week. While Kiran will face China's Australia Open winner Weng Hong Yang, Sathish, who had claimed the Odisha Masters title last December, takes on a qualifier in their respective opening matches. In Sindhu's absence, Ashmita Chaliha, Malvika Bansod and Aakarshi Kashyap will look to keep India's flag fluttering with a solid show in women's singles.

The Guwahati shuttler will be squaring off against Indonesia's Ester Nurumi Tri Wardoyo, while Malvika faces top seed Chinese Han Yue and Aakarshi is pitted against Busanan Ongbamrungphan of Thailand.

Young Unnati Hooda and Imad Farooqui Samiya will also hope to produce a good show when they take on Belgium's Lianne Tan and Ćhina's Goa Fang Jie.

In women's doubles, fourth seeded Indian pair of Tanisha Crasto and Ashwini Ponnappa, who has qualified for the Paris games, will also be in the fray but will begin campaign in second round after receiving a bye.

#### Atletico Madrid moves closer to securing Champions League spot after beating Celta Vigo

**AP** MADRID

Atletico Madrid moved closer to securing the fourth and final Champions League spot with a 1-0 win over Celta Vigo in the Spanish league.

Rodrigo De Paul scored an 84th-minute winner for Atletico, which opened an eight-point gap to fifth-place Athletic Bilbao with three rounds remaining. Athletic

was held at home to a 2-2 draw with Osasuna on Saturday.

"You know me, we have to keep improving until the end," Atletico Madrid coach Diego Simeone said. "We have to keep fighting no matter what." It was the third win in a row for Atletico, which is three points behind third-place Barcelona. The Catalan club hosts seventh-place Real Sociedad on Monday.

Celta, which has lost three of its last five games, dropped to 17th place and five points above the relegation zone. Rayo Vallecano moved to 16th, also five points from danger, after a 0-0 draw at

eighth-place Valencia. BETIS WINS: Real Betis beat last-place



Almeria 3-2 at home to move to sixth place and strengthen its hold on the European qualifying spots.
Pablo Fornals, Isco and

Ayoze Pérez scored for Betis, which has won four of its last five matches. Almeria was coming off only

its second win of the season in the league, at Rayo Vallecano. CADIZ HOPEFUL: Cadiz,

sitting in 18th place, kept alive its hopes of escaping demotion with a 1-0 win against midtable Getafe.

Rubén Alcaraz scored the winner for the hosts by converting a 35th-minute penalty kick. It was Cadiz's first win after a run of three losses and a draw.

REAL MADRID CELEBRATES: Real Madrid, which clinched its 36th league title last weekend, won 4-0 at Granada on Saturday. The Spanish powerhouse celebrated on Sunday by parading through the city.

The celebrations did not take place last weekend because Madrid played Bayern Munich on Wednesday in the second leg of the Champions League semifinals

Vijayawada | Tuesday May 14, 2024



# tollywood





#### Ranveer Singh, Prasanth Varma's mega collaboration soon to be made official

n a highly anticipated collab-oration, Bollywood power-house Ranveer Singh and acclaimed director Prasanth Varma seem to be official soon. The news, initially hinted at a few weeks ago, is being confirmed by sources, sparking excitement among fans and cinephiles alike.

Renowned for his dynamic performances and bold film choices, Ranveer Singh's admiration for Prasanth Varma's work, particularly the Telugu hit HanuMan, starring Teja Sajja, served as the catalyst for this collaboration. While official details were initially shrouded in secrecy, recent reports shed light on the project's development.

According to a report, Ranveer Singh and Prasanth Varma have formally launched their ambitious project, signaling the beginning of an epic cinematic journey. With a staggering budget of Rs 300 crore, the film promises to be a cinematic

spectacle of grand proportions.

Described as a period drama with a pan-India appeal, the project has been shrouded in anticipation. After meticulous deliberation, the duo has reportdeliberation, the duo has reportedly settled on the title *Brahma Rakshasa*, signifying a blend of mythological intrigue and contemporary storytelling.

Set for a multi-lingual release, *Brahma Rakshasa* is poised to

captivate audiences across the nation with its compelling narrative and visual splendour. While the official announcement from the actor and director is eagerly awaited, the unveiling of the film's title has already ignited fervent anticipation among fans, setting the stage for a cinematic event of epic proportions.

## for Suriya's *Vaadivaasal*,' reveals director

For the village action drama Vaadivaasal, which was announced several months ago, actor Suriya and director Vetrimaaran have paired up. The film has regained attention while still in pre-production. Vetrimaaran revealed in a recent interview that he only has 20 days left to finish filming Viduthalai: Part 2, his next production that stars Vijay Sethupathi and Soori in pivotal parts He added that he will start filming Vaadivaasal within the next three months. More updates are highly anticipated by fans! The music for this film, which Kalaipuli S Thanu produced under the V Creations banner, will be composed by Prakash Kumar. In this movie, Andrea Jeremiah is probably going to be paired opposite Suriya.





## Dhanush donates ₹1 crore to Actor Sangam building construction



Jr NTR

wraps up

schedule

Hrithik Roshan.

on May 12.

*War 2's* first

Actor Jr NTR has wrapped up the first schedule of his upcoming film *War 2* starring

A source revealed that the actor

wrapped up the first schedule

"Jr NTR wrapped the first schedule of *War 2* on May 12.

He shot for some extensive

before heading back to Hyderabad," said the source.

Jr NTR was pictured casting his

vote in Hyderabad on Monday. The *RRR* star was joined by his

wife Lakshmi Pranathi and

mother Shalini to cast their

votes at the polling center at Obul Reddy School in Jubilee

Talking about *War 2*, the film is

the sequel to the 2019 film War

directed by Siddharth Anand.

The film marks the return of

The second installment also

stars Kiara Advani and is

directed by Ayan Mukerji

Hrithik as Major Kabir.

action sequences over a schedule of 30 days in Mumbai

Renowned actor Dhanush K. Raja has once again demonstrated his philanthropic spirit by generously donating Rs 1 crore towards the

construction of the Actor Sangam building. The contribution comes as a significant boost to the ongoing efforts to estab-lish a dedicated space for the

welfare and development of actors within the industry.

Dhanush, known for his versatile performances and compassionate nature, made the gener-ous donation from his personal funds, reaffirming his commit-ment to supporting initiatives aimed at the betterment of the entertainment community.

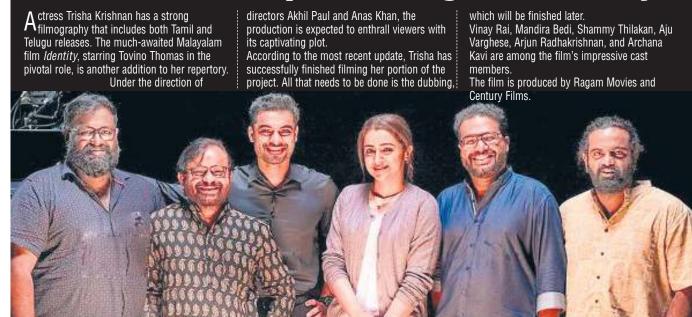
The Actor Sangam, also known as the South Indian Artistes' Association, plays a crucial role in advocating for the rights and welfare of actors across various film industries in South India. The construction of a dedicated building serves as a testament to the

organisation's mission to provide a conducive environment for actors to thrive professionally and personally.

Dhanush's contribution underscores the importance of solidarity and mutual support within the entertainment fraternity, setting a commendable example for fellow actors and industry stakeholders to follow.

As the construction of the Actor Sangam building progresses with the support of individuals like Dhannak, it symbolicae als like Dhanush, it symbolises not only a physical structure but also a beacon of hope and unity for actors across South India.

## Trisha winds up shooting for *identity*



## T-TOWN COMES IN FULL SWING TO EXERCISE THEIR RIGHT!





ollywood celebrities, much like citizens across the nation, exercised their democratic rights by casting their votes during elections. Beyond the glitz and glamour of the silver screen, these stars actively participate in shaping the political landscape of their state and country.

When election season arrives, Tollywood's finest, from actors to directors and producers, step out of their reel personas to fulfill their civic duty. With their influence and popularity, they often serve as role models, encouraging their fans and followers to participate in the democratic process.

Their presence at polling booths not only underscores the importance of voting but also sends a powerful message about civic responsibility. It's a reminder that, irrespective of their celebrity status, they are first and foremost citizens committed to contributing to the democratic fabric of society.

From Chiranjeevi to Allu Arjun to Rajamouli, here are some pictures of celebrities casting their votes.









